



NAVY NEWS

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KARACHI KIDS

PORTLAND IN PAKISTAN

Cutting a 'V' through the Mediterranean, HMS St Albans manoeuvres at speed during Allied war games. The frigate has been at the heart of NATO anti-submarine exercises and anti-piracy patrols off the coasts of Italy and North Africa. See page 10 for details.
Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East

JUNGLY BEAT

SEA KINGS IN SAND & SNOW

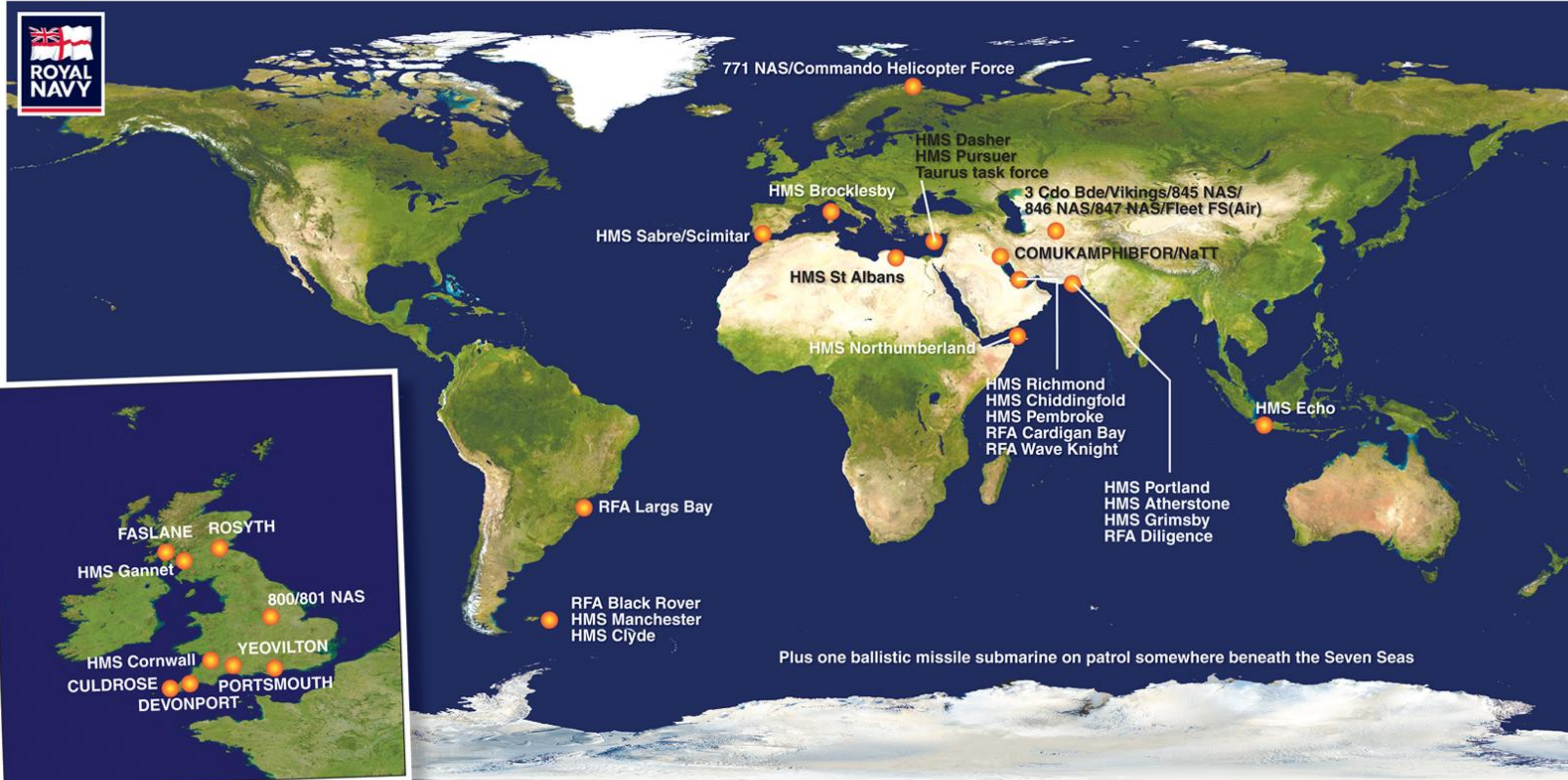
CYPRIOT GAMES

TAURUS CLASS IN THE MED

ACTIVE DUTIES



GLOBAL REACH



Fleet Focus

IT'S quite some time since the Mediterranean was the focal point of the Fleet.

But this past month has seen major exercises in Cyprus and Turkey (involving the **Taurus 09** task group), NATO exercises for **HMS Brocklesby** and **HMS St Albans** and a bit of pageantry for the Royal Marines.

We'll begin with Taurus in Akrotiri Bay – **HM Ships Ocean** and **Bulwark** are the springboards for **40 Commando**, escorted by **Argyll** and **Somerset** while submarine **HMS Talent** provides the below-the-surface shield and **RFAs Mounts Bay, Lyme Bay, Fort Austin** and **RFA Wave Ruler** support the whole affair. See pages 4 and 26-27 for a round-up.

Shields though Argyll, Somerset and Talent may be, they're no match for **HMS Dasher**. The 'angry little bee' made a nuisance of herself to test the force's response to a terrorist attack (see page 4).

Before reaching Akrotiri Bay, elements of **40 Commando** could be found in Gibraltar celebrating their freedom of The Rock (see right).

Also in the Med, but well away from the Taurus lot, is **HMS St Albans**, lapping up the sights of Rome and Egypt with a NATO task force (see page 10).

And in Sardinia... Minehunter **HMS Brocklesby** took part in NATO exercises... and promptly found a live mine (see page 5).

Away from the Mediterranean, **HMS Portland** briefly broke off anti-piracy duties in the Indian Ocean to join mine countermeasures vessels **Atherstone** and **Grimsby** plus **RFA Diligence** for a Pakistani-led international exercise and fleet review (see page 8).

Grimsby and Atherstone are part of a four-strong mine warfare force based in Bahrain with **HMS Chiddingfold** and **Pembroke**, while two mainstays of the group – **Blyth** and **Ramsey** – have returned to Blighty after 36 months away (see opposite).

Also home from the Gulf – and also blessed by glorious weather for her return – was **HMS Lancaster**, back in Pompey after 190 days away. Her place around Iraq's oil platforms has been taken by her Solent sister **HMS Richmond** (see opposite).

Britain's oldest active warship – **HMS Sceptre** – is active again after emerging from an overhaul... with a feeling of *déjà vu* (see page 6), while **HMS Trenchant** is finally able to put her 'feet' up after being on active duties for ten of the past 12 months (see page 7).

The bravery of a string of fliers from Search and Rescue unit **HMS Gannet** has been acknowledged with numerous operational honours (see page 6).

Colleagues from Gannet's fellow SAR unit, **771 NAS**, headed inside the Arctic Circle to test their ability to operate in the harshest of winter conditions (see page 5).

It was obviously quite crowded in Norwegian skies for some of the **Commando Helicopter Force** could also be found among the fjords for Clockwork (see page 20).

The bulk of the CHF is deployed in Afghanistan in support of **3 Commando Brigade**. A young pilot offers us an insight into the challenging helicopter mission (see pages 22-23). The task in Helmand has, sadly, demanded more sacrifices from the ranks of the brigade (see page 7).

HMS Albion has a fresh lick of paint of her hull – and makes an impressive sight in her dry dock in Devonport (see page 14)...

...But not as impressive as the austere beauty of the Falklands. We champion the work of the islands' constant naval guardians, **HMS Clyde** and **RFA Black Rover** (see pages 24-25).

And finally... happy 50th birthday to **FOST**, an experience every sailor has perhaps endured rather than enjoyed. We look back at the first half century (see pages 36-7).



IT IS the only battle honour they bear on their legendary insignia.

Of their countless battles from the shores of the Falklands to the grey waters of Jutland, the sands of Normandy, the steppe of Afghanistan, the desert of Iraq, only 'Gibraltar' can be found on the Globe and Laurel.

It is because of the marines – the prefix Royal would not be added for another century – that Gibraltar became British and stayed British.

And where those sailors from the sea came ashore on July 24 1704 a monument now stands, unveiled as part of a weekend of celebrations on The Rock to mark the overseas territory's unbreakable bond with the Corps.

Gibraltarians awarded the Royal Marines the freedom of The Rock 13 years ago.

On a wet late winter's day in 2009, the men of 40 Commando exercised that honour marching through Casemate Square (pictured

above by LA (Phot: Al Macleod) the narrow streets, watched by large numbers of locals despite the inclement weather.

The green berets were then treated to a public reception with one of their own – Lt Gen Sir Robert Fulton, Royal Marine and Governor General of Gibraltar.

The following day – in rather brighter weather – Commandant General Royal Marines Maj Gen Garry Robison revealed the memorial, a plinth embossed with a globe and laurel.

The commandos arrived in Gib courtesy of landing support ship **RFA Mounts Bay** which was taking them to the Mediterranean and Far East on the Taurus 09 amphibious deployment.

The Norton Manor-based Royals used the passage from Plymouth to Gibraltar to hone their drill skills, making use of Mounts Bay's sprawling flight deck in particular.

"The marines of Alpha Company worked

exceptionally hard preparing for the day," said their CO Maj Sean Brady. "Representing the Corps on such an occasion is a perfect opportunity to pay our respects to Royal Marines of the past and their exceptional achievements. They continue to inspire us all."

40 Cdo's CO Lt Col Paul James added: "Gibraltar holds a hugely-important position in our history. Every Royal Marine is acutely aware of the events of the early 18th Century and the traditions they helped engender."

Among those marching through the hallowed streets of Gibraltar was 22-year-old Mne Andy Tipping.

"All of us were proud to be a part of this parade," he said. "Every Royal Marine learns about the taking and holding of Gibraltar during our training, so it's been a great honour to follow in the footsteps of our forebears."

More from Taurus on pages 4, 26-7

All that glisters



● A blast of water from a tug as HMS Blyth returns to Faslane after 2½ years
Picture: PO(Phot) Tam MacDonald, FRPU Clyde

THE wait for some was longer than others.

The last time Her Majesty's Ships **Blyth** and **Ramsey** saw Gareloch, Tony Blair was premier, the word 'credit' was usually followed by 'card' not 'crunch' and HMS Daring was but a hull in the water.

That was late 2006. A lot's happened since then – not least for the two mine countermeasures vessels who have helped to eliminate the threat of the underwater weapons from stretches of the northern Gulf.

But now they need fret no more about life east of Suez, for the duo are back home in Faslane, two and a half years after departing.

On the seaways it is 6,500 miles from the sisters' Middle East base (Bahrain) to home on the Clyde, hopping from Bahrain-Oman-Djibouti-Malta-Gib-Porto for the necessary supplies and fuel on the six-week passage.

That passage proved to be remarkably uneventful. The Gulf of Aden proved remarkably pirate-free (although merchantmen were delighted to be in the presence of British warships for the brief time the Sandown-class vessels passed through).

There was a chance for hands to bathe in the Red Sea, 70 miles off the coast of Saudi Arabia, where the water was a balmy 25°C.

Despite a choppy Med, the pair reached Malta a day earlier than planned; after nearly three full weeks at sea the ships spent five days alongside undergoing maintenance before undertaking the final legs.

And wouldn't you know it? There was even Gulf weather waiting for them (well, sunshine, if not the temperatures) upon finally arriving on the Clyde.

There were also more than 200 friends and family waiting on the Faslane jetty.

Although the ships have been away for two and

a half years, their sailors have not; they've been rotated through the vessels from the Sandown crew 'pool'.

The latest occupants of Blyth and Ramsey have been aboard for eight months.

"Ramsey and Blyth might be small ships, but their impact has been enormous," said Ramsey's CO Lt Cdr Nick Borbone proudly.

"What they have achieved is testament to the dedication and professionalism of the eight different crews that have been involved in the deployment since its inception."

HMS Lancaster has not been away quite as long as Blyth or Ramsey: 190 days to be accurate.

More than 700 wellwishers were waiting for her arrival from the Gulf, where she's been guardship for Iraq's two oil platforms over the winter.

She spent precisely 82 days steaming around the KAAOT and ABOT platforms (covering 8,351 nautical miles in the process – quite impressive when the patrol area is pretty constricted).

In all 31 tankers and 38 tugs were swept by her boarding team (it's a duty increasingly performed by Iraqi sailors and marines), while more than 300 vessels were queried by her ops room team.

And while all that was going on, 250 million barrels of oil – worth around \$10bn (£6.8bn) were safely pumped into waiting tankers during the Red Rose frigate's time on task.

Strangely, the enduring memory for most Lancastrians is not the sight of the two rather drab oil platforms, but rather the final sight of the QE2 at sea.

"Coming off the back end of a three-week patrol, digging out to put polish on the ship, and then for the day itself – it couldn't have come off any better," said PO O'Neill.

"I think that first cheer really showed the QE2 that Lancaster has spirit."

The last patrol – two weeks in February in

defence watches – saw Flag Officer Sea Training personnel visiting the ship, inspecting both the Navigating Officer, Lt Tom McPhail, and his sub department, as well as the ships' Merlin Flight.

Members of the Naval Flying Standards Flight were also on board for several days, appraising the abilities of the two pilots – Lt Matt Robinson and Nick Bell. The duo and their supporting team were praised for their high sortie rate in support of operations.

After punching through the Strait of Hormuz, the ship carried out an anti-piracy sweep in the Gulf of Aden, then entered the Red Sea where the Operation Telic baton was handed to her sister HMS Richmond, steaming south.

That at last offered the ship's company the first real chance to relax together in six months, with a barbecue and camel (read 'horse') racing night put on by the warrant and chief petty officers' mess. The event raised several hundred pounds for the ship's charity, and a good evening was had by all.

From Suez, the Type 23 frigate made for Souda Bay in Crete and an overnight fuel stop heading west for Valencia in Spain through a choppy Mediterranean (what else in February?) – the final port of call of the deployment.

"I am incredibly proud of HMS Lancaster's ship's company," said CO Cdr Rory Bryan.

"Each and every one of them has performed admirably in the demanding operational environment of the Northern Gulf. They have consistently delivered everything I have asked of them and collectively risen to the challenges they have faced together."

Meanwhile back in the Gulf...

Ramsey's and Blyth's places in Bahrain have been taken by their sisters **Pembroke** and **Grimsby** (both will be in the Middle East until 2011).

They – plus Hunt-class minehunter HMS

Atherstone – played host to Britain's second most senior admiral.

CINC Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, plus Director General Surface Ships Rear Admiral Bob Love, dropped in on the ships to discuss operations in this most trying of environments.

For engineer Admiral Love, there was also a chance to discuss the new forward support for the Bahrain-based warships as well as other maintenance issues.

The three ships – plus HMS Chiddingfold, the last of the RN mine warfare quartet in the Gulf – have most recently been honing their mine-finding skills with US vessels.

Now Bahrain may lack the attractions perhaps of other Gulf cities, but Jack being Jack, he can make the most of it.

The hub of British operations in the Gulf is the HQ of the US Fifth Fleet.

"My God do they know how to construct a base – everything that you could want under one roof, it's kinda like Toys 'R' Us for sailors," says **HMS Richmond's** LET(WE) 'Robby' Robertson.

You cannot stay in Toys 'R' Us forever, sadly. No, after four days, Richmond had to sail for the platforms.

There they found locals not too chuffed with the weather – good for Brits, bad for 'Gulfers'.

"It was freezing," says Robby. "Only" about 15°C. There were people wearing woolly pulleys (jumpers) and foul-weather jackets on and all sorts.

"You could understand this at night on the bridge, but at midday in the Northern Arabian Gulf never."

Don't worry, we've a feeling it's about to get hotter...

● *Lancs for the memories...* HMS Lancaster (foreground) hands the Telic baton to her sister HMS Richmond in the Red Sea





Cypriot games



● 'Angry little bee' HMS Dasher races around Akrotiri Bay

THERE are pleasant ways to start the day. Walking the dog. A cup of tea and a read of the paper. A full English.

Or you could go hell for leather and try to tear a strip out of one of Britain's capital ships.

While the good folks of HMS Ocean and Bulwark were chomping their cornflakes and slapping a bit of marmalade on toast, a foe was bearing down on them.

Bobbing and bumping through Akrotiri Bay at full speed (14kts or 18 on a good day with a following wind), HMS Dasher is closing rapidly on Bulwark, determined to test the assault ship's response to a speedboat attacking her.

On the wheel, CPO Paul Mercer, Dasher's marine engineer officer, rubs his hands. "Game on."

For the next hour the small P2000 patrol boat will move among the ships of the Taurus 09 task force "like a little angry bee".

So will the bee sting, or will it get swatted?

Dasher's radio crackles. "This is British warship Lima One Five," says a rather stern Irish voice over the radio. "Do

not come within 1,000 yards. Turn away or we will be forced to take action."

On Bulwark's bridge wing, the lamp flashes repeatedly.

Dot. Dot. Dash. Dot. Dot. Dash. Dot. Dot. Dash. Turn away. "This is the MV Island Star," says Dasher's CO Lt Charlie Barrow. "We're just out on a pleasure cruise."

Bulwark isn't impressed and repeats her warning.

"I don't feel like doing that. I think I'm going to continue on my course," says Lt Barrow.

Silence. No response from Bulwark.

Dasher/Island Star continues on her way – still unthreatening at present.

"MV Island Star, we will take action to defend ourselves. Turn away now."

With the assault ship lowering a landing craft from her port davits, the assault ship's room for manoeuvre is severely limited.

It's left to her upper deck gun crews, rather than zig-zagging, to fend off any attack.

"Bulwark tend to be aggressive, but we gave them a good kicking last night," Lt Barrow grins. Time for another kicking.

Two of Dasher's crew (one third of her complement) pick up SA80s. Two more man the GPMGs.

The boat suddenly wheels over and charges towards Bulwark.

"Take it," orders Lt Barrow.

Pop. Pop. Pop. Spent cartridges from LET 'Dodge' Long's SA80 spill across Dasher's bridge.

Brri. Brri. Brri. CPO Will Willets lets rip with the GPMG.

Over the drone of the engine there's the chatter of machine-gun fire from Bulwark. They opened fire after Dasher popped a few rounds off.

The ship and her Cyprus Squadron sister HMS Pursuer are typically charged with safeguarding the waters of the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus, but with the Taurus task force in town, the pair have been asked to test the big ships' reaction to a terrorist attack.

As any actor will tell you, sometimes it's fun to play the bad guy.

Dasher turns towards Ocean. "This is British warship Lima One Two. Please identify yourself."

"This is the pleasure cruiser Island Star. We're just having a nice day out. Can you tell me what type of ship you are?"

Silence. "This is British warship Lima One Two. Do not close within one nautical mile."

A landing craft breaks off from normal ship-to-shore duties ferrying men and material to begin chasing Dasher.

A couple of poker-faced Royals man GPMGs on the front of the craft and stare at the angry little bee buzzing around the warships.

"Those booties. We'll 'ave 'em," says CPO Mercer.

Dasher turns away. The landing

craft slows. The po-faced Royals remain po-faced.

On to tanker Wave Ruler, with her rather precise warning: "Unknown vessel at Latitude X, Longitude Y, this is Alpha Three Nine Zero. Do not come within 1,000 yards."

Of course, the angry little bee ignores the admonition and heads pell-mell for the RFA.

Typically, the RFA are slightly more timid than the warships. But not today. They open fire before Dasher's GPMGs begin rat-a-tat-tatting away at the tanker's hull.

At the end of this hour-long raid on the Taurus ships, Dasher returns to Akrotiri Mole, the squadron's home. Lt Barrow will compile a short report providing feedback on the morning's attacks.

As the small boat turns away from Wave Ruler, the radio crackles into life once more.

"Many thanks for all your help today," a Scottish voice imparts. "That was a good workout."

What friendly enemies... **THREATS** in the Mediterranean don't just come on the surface.

Sometimes, beware what lies beneath – in this case HMS Talent.

The hunter-killer boat is the Taurus task force's underwater guardian.

But, like Dasher before her, sometimes she enjoys playing the villain...

The boat invited four 'skimmers' – from the force's above-water protection, HM Ships Argyll and Somerset – aboard for a bit of mischief.

Two men from each frigate went deep (while four submariners headed in the opposite direction to join the Type 23s).

With everyone aboard, let the games begin for an anti-submarine exercise.

Immediately on diving, Talent drove up a line of warships at close range showing different mast configurations, providing a pyrotechnic demonstration and simulating an emergency surface.

The skimmers were given a thorough tour of the boat from sound and control rooms to the engine and machinery spaces and helped Talent's two chefs prepare a three-choice curry evening (with naan bread and popadoms) for 129 people in a space smaller than a single garage.

They also all had the chance to 'drive' the submarine as they conducted planesman training – altering the T-boat's depth and course.

And, best of all, they got to simulate a Spearfish torpedo attack on their ships, under the (temporary) command of Somerset's chef Logs Nick Waugh. "I think my mates would be pretty miffed with me if they knew I had ordered a torpedo attack on them," he said.

His shipmate ET(ME) Darrell Sillah said the "experience was brilliant. The submariners are really close-knit and really good at their jobs."

"I had such a buzz especially when the (simulated) torpedo fired and shook the boat. It was exciting to see my ship marked on the screen in front of me and having to steer the torpedo into it."

With Somerset 'despatched', it was Argyll's turn at the hands of deadly duo POET(WE)s 'Jack' Russell and Steve Wiltshire.

"Talent was absolutely fantastic," said Jack. "Everyone onboard seems to know everyone else's job and they look out for

each other. I really enjoyed having a go at sinking my own ship. If only the lads knew!"

Steve – who found life aboard Talent "cramped, friendly and absolutely awesome" – added: "I'm worried what the Captain and WEO might think if they knew how much I had enjoyed it."

The quartet from Argyll and Somerset weren't the only guests aboard Talent.

With Exercise Cyprus Wader at its height (see the centre pages), the task force was treated to the rare sight of a submarine on the surface.

Talent rode above rather than beneath the waves so the Royal Marines could have a little 'play'.

The commandos tested launching and recovering their RIBs from the submarine (neither a typical nor easy manoeuvre).

Those who helped the Royals with their exercises were then treated to a 'rollercoaster' tour of the Taurus fleet, zipping in and out of the ships in Akrotiri Bay and returning to Talent thoroughly soaked, but exhilarated.

"That was brilliant," said a breathless LS(TSM) Plowden. "I can't believe the speed and power of those boats."

Talent cannot match the Royals' RIBs for speed, but she offers a little more in the way of firepower...

As the green berets found when they toured the boat and were shown what Talent can do (such as beach reconnaissance, a task she conducted as a preliminary to Wader).

That tour was, as one Royal told the deeps, "the highlight of my deployment so far".

■ **MORE** from the Cyprus Squadron next month

MESOTHELIOMA?

Mesothelioma has been conclusively linked with exposure to asbestos and asbestos-containing products. Thousands of Merchant Navy and Royal Navy personnel as well as Ship repair, Shipyard and Dockyard workers that were employed around asbestos and asbestos-containing products may be affected.

If you, or someone you know, has been diagnosed with mesothelioma or lung cancer you may be able to file a claim in the United States, and may be entitled to collect financial compensation.

Time restrictions apply, so don't delay. Please contact the North Carolina Lawyers of Wallace & Graham by calling 0208 778 9644

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● A Royal Marines Offshore Raiding Craft approaches HMS Talent in the blue waters of Akrotiri Bay

Picture: LA(Phot) Bernie Henesy, HMS Ocean



Good – but at a high price

Testing times for new jet

THREE test versions of the Fleet Air Arm's 21st Century fast jet have been ordered. To date, all demonstration models of the Joint Strike Fighter (also known as the Joint Combat Aircraft and F35 Lightning II) have flown only in the USA, where their construction is being led by defence giant Lockheed Martin. Now British aviators will get their hands on the jet after Defence Secretary John Hutton ordered the test models during a visit to the USA.

The JSF will replace the Harrier, forming the punch of the future carriers – and mark a two-generation leap as RN pilots get their hands on their first 'fifth-generation' fighter. The UK version of the jet will be a multi-role fighter/attack aircraft with a short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) capability similar to the Harrier, and will be able to operate from land bases or aircraft carriers.

Unlike the Harrier, however, the JSF is capable of supersonic flight, features stealth technology and has increased range and payload.

"Working alongside their US colleagues, our pilots will gain an unrivalled understanding of this awesome aircraft and its capabilities," said Mr Hutton.

"This is a vital programme for UK Defence both for the military and for industry, with over 100 UK companies involved in the programme."

The first conventional variants of the jet are due to enter service with the US military in 2011-12.

The version bought for the UK will not be operational before the arrival of the first new carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, in 2014.

LATE, over budget, a construction programme dogged in its early years by over-optimism and the MOD and the defence industry locking horns, and with a main armament not ready for another two years.

Despite the fanfares accompanying HMS Daring's arrival in Portsmouth in January, an official report into the development and construction of the Type 45 destroyer and her five sisters says the flagship project suffered substantial problems in its early years.

The National Audit Office – the watchdog of Government spending – says once fully operational in mid-2011, the next-generation destroyers will be able to do everything expected of them and will significantly enhance the Fleet's ability to fend off air attack.

But the road to that date has been strewn with obstacles, says the report, which have had a significant knock-on effect on the rest of the RN, not least the ships which Daring and her siblings are replacing.

The audit office report paints a bleak picture of the state of the ageing Type 42 destroyer fleet, which has increasingly suffered from defects since 2000 – despite the best efforts of their sailors – and its availability for operations has suffered accordingly.

The report says some 42s were axed prematurely – notably HM Ships Newcastle, Glasgow and Cardiff in 2005 – to save upwards of £120m, and deep maintenance programmes for still-serving ships have been culled, shaving another £93m off the budget.

Paid-off and mothballed 42s – Southampton and Exeter are now also laid up and HMS Nottingham is winding down – have also been cannibalised for spare parts to keep the rest of the destroyer fleet running and to keep costs down.

In spite of all these cost-cutting measures, the delays to the Daring

programme has forced the lifespan of the remaining Type 42s to be stretched to 2013 – when Sea Dart will be obsolete and when the last of the Type 45s, HMS Duncan, enters service.

That stretching will cost the taxpayer just short of £200m, the biggest single cost being paying for the sailors as the aged destroyers are manpower-heavy (each ship requires roughly 100 more sailors than the 45s).

As for the 42s' replacements, the NAO says the initial stages of procurement were plagued by overly optimistic assessments of the costs involved – and what dates the ships could be delivered by.

When the order for six ships (of a class of 12) was placed back in 2000, the anticipated cost of the sextet was £5bn with the first destroyer, HMS Daring, joining the Fleet in November 2007.

Daring will now enter service at the end of this year, the cost of the vessels has risen to £6.46bn – and the order book was closed at six ships.

"Project control and decision-making were poor, governance structures were ineffective and relationships between the department and BVT broke down," the report states.

Since Whitehall took these problems in hand, however, in 2007, progress has been much more smooth, costs have not risen and there have been no additional delays. Relationships between the MOD and industry are "now on a much firmer footing", says the report.

Dauntless, the second Type 45, will be the first of the class to fire the anti-air missile Sea Viper (formerly PAAMS), the ship's principal weapon, late next year.

Daring will fire a Sea Viper in the spring of 2011, shortly before her inaugural deployment.

Defence procurement minister Quentin Davies acknowledged the report's findings – and was pleased that the National Audit Office had taken note of the progress made with the Type 45 programme.

"These are complex, sophisticated warships and where problems arose in the early stages MOD gripped the issue, renegotiated contracts where required and got the programme on track," he added.

"I have been following this programme closely since my appointment, and I am pleased to be able to say that progress with both building and sea trials is currently going very well."

771 earns a blue nose

WHILE the West Country was (briefly) in the grip of snow and ice, the rescuers normally in its skies were 1,500 miles away... in the grip of snow and ice.

Two Search and Rescue helicopters headed inside the Arctic Circle for some extreme weather training.

How extreme? How does -52°C grab you? Mercifully, that was the lowest temperatures fell (aided by wind chill). For most of the time it was a rather warmer -15°C.

771 NAS dispatched two Sea Kings to the Royal Norwegian Air Force base at Bardufoss – between Harstad and Tromsø – so their crews could learn the art of winter survival.

"If you can survive in the Arctic, you can survive anywhere," said 771 CO Lt Cdr 'Sharky' Finn.

But first you have to get to the Arctic... and it's quite a slog. The SAR helicopters stopped off in Aberdeen and the East Brae oil platform, 165 miles northeast of the Granite City, as they hopped from Cornwall to Bardufoss.

Lt Cdr Finn and his three instructors – Lt Cdr Steve Hopkins, CPO(ACMN) Jonathon Clarke-Pickering and PO(ACMN) Jase Bibby – took four pilots and eight observers to train in Norway.

And the students were thrown in at the deep end: three nights of survival training, living in tents for the first two, before being kicked out on the third evening, living in brush wood shelters.

Suitably acclimatised, the fliers could get to grips with operating in such conditions. With Cornwall covered in snow, why go to Norway? Because the precipitation in the West Country was the 'wrong type of snow' if you want to teach the art of a snow landing.

"The snow has to be powdery so that it 'recirculates'," explained Lt Cdr Finn. "The pilot cannot see anything beyond the rotors and he must use a bush or rock close to the aircraft as a hover reference."

"This can be a difficult skill to master, particularly at night using night vision goggles – the blowing snow can cause disorientation."

And while snow is, thankfully, a rarity in Cornwall, there are lessons from Norway which will serve the 771 team well on their rescues around the county.

Just before Christmas, one of the squadron's Sea Kings whipped up the sand ferociously while landing on Penhale during a training mission.

"It's important that the pilots are trained to cope with these conditions," said Lt Cdr Finn. "Unlike sitting in sand and dust – which erodes the blades and engines – snow does not cause any damage to the aircraft."

■ Clockwork ice, page 20

Royals enjoy summer retreat

THE Massed Bands of the Royal Marines will perform their world-renowned Beating Retreat ceremony on London's Horse Guards Parade in celebration of the 88th birthday of their Captain General, the Duke of Edinburgh, over three evenings in June.

The spectacle is only performed once every three years.

RM Bands from Portsmouth, Plymouth, Scotland and CTRM Lympstone will all be taking part in this summer's event, 200 musicians in total.

Proceeds from the three days of pageantry (June 9, 10 – Prince Philip's birthday – and 11) will go to Service charities including Help for Heroes, Seafarers UK and the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity.

The ceremony of military music and precision drill and colour traces its roots back to the 16th Century.

Tickets are available from Ticketmaster; call 0844 8472504 or visit www.ticketmaster.co.uk/Royal-Marines-Beating-Retreat-2009-tickets/ artist/983800

Prices are £12 each or £40 for a family ticket (two adults and three children).

For more details about the performances and the RM Band Service at www.royalmarinesbands.co.uk/ BR09

'chuting stars

THIS is the unmistakable outline of a parachute-dropped mine – with the chute still attached though crumpled – on the seabed of the Mediterranean.

It was found by the Seafox mine disposal system of HMS Brocklesby as 13 NATO nations converged on Sardinian waters for a major naval exercise, Loyal Mariner 2009.

Brocklesby is currently attached to NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1. The force linked up with the organisation's other mine warfare group (cunningly numbered No.2), plus other naval units including carriers, frigates, assault ships and submarines for the ten-day exercise – 30 vessels in all.

Numerous dummy mines were located by the international mine-hunting group, but the parachute mine was the first live ordnance (not part of the war games) located.

The ranges at Teulada in southern Sardinia have been used for the past half century – and quite a lot of ordnance fell short.

"We were expecting there to be some ordnance around the gunnery range, but this find demonstrates that our sonar is performing very well. Coupled with Seafox it gives us an excellent capability," said Brocklesby's CO Lt Cdr Tom Tredray.

"Seafox is a big step forward – better than the old 'yellow submarines' we previously operated with."

The mini red submersible is controlled from the Hunt-class ship by a 'wafer-thin' fibre-optic cable. Its sonar and CCTV are used for a closer inspection of a suspicious object, before closing in for the kill (Seafox is expendable) if it's a live target.

■ Return of a Z-lister, page 29

EXPERIENCE SOUL STIRRING PAGEANTRY BEATING RETREAT

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Meet the 'all-new' HMS York

BACK enjoying life in the "blue-grey crinkly stuff" (aka ocean) is the good ship York which is shaking off the cobwebs after a lengthy refit in Portsmouth.

Aside from a general overhaul of most of the Type 42, the new-look York – "the ship looks sparkling" says her Commanding Officer Cdr Andrew Price – is faster than the old York thanks to a 'transom flap' on the stern (aka 'go-faster ramp').

The ship's automated close-in weapon system Phalanx has also been upgraded to the latest version.

Not surprisingly the ship's company are looking forward to watching Phalanx fire (it belts out thousands of rounds per minute...).

But before that day there's a lot of rather less exciting tests and trials: fire, man overboard, breakdown drills and so on.

A formal handover to the Fleet and rededication are planned for later this spring, while a hometown visit after a lengthy hiatus is due to take place this summer.

"When she does return ready for tasking, HMS York will pack a hefty punch," said Cdr Price.

"We are all very much looking forward to being able to show off the new HMS York to all our friends and affiliations in the north."

Kent takes a shower

THE upper decks of HMS Kent received a thorough dampening as the Type 23 frigate tested her 'pre-wetting' system after a winter of maintenance.

The ship has spent the past three months undergoing a mini-overhaul in Portsmouth Naval Base following a demanding deployment in the Far East last year.

She's due to head east again later this spring, so a fair bit of work had to be squeezed in over the winter months – and a fair bit of work is now demanded of the ship's company as they bring the frigate back to life.

Even while the ship herself was a bit of a building site, the ship's company could be found at HMS Collingwood or on Whale Island undergoing navigation and fire-fighting training.

All of which – and more – has continued now the warship's back at sea, from engine trials and tests of the Seawolf missile system to pre-wetting (meant to wash biological/radioactive agents and other nasties off the upper decks).

Once all Kent's systems work individually, the next step is to test the ship as a team – which means a spell of 'ever-popular' Operational Sea Training before the frigate deploys in May.

Sausage back on the menu

IT'S sausage time again with HMS Cumberland back at sea after three months of maintenance work and upgrades in Devonport.

The Mighty Sausage can now take the RN's improved sea boats – Pacific 24s – on patrol thanks to new davits. The 24s are 10kts-plus faster than their predecessors, the 22s.

The Type 22 frigate's also received a new gas turbine, tweaks to her sonar and communications kit, even a buffed-up rudder and propellers.

She's now conducting trials of her weapons and propulsion systems in the South-west Approaches, including High Seas Firings of some of her weaponry, before a period of operational sea training.

'Dedication and determination'

AWAY from the front line of Afghanistan there is no more dangerous or challenging flying than Search and Rescue missions – as recognised by a string of operational honours.

Five fliers from HMS Gannet have been singled out for four high-profile rescues conducted at the limits of physical and mental endurance, three in the mountains, one off the sands of Blackpool.

The latter rescue – which also involved an RAF SAR helicopter (whose crew have been similarly honoured) – saw 23 passengers and crew of the roll-on, roll-off ferry MV Riverdance saved in horrendous conditions in January 2008.

After the RAF had rescued eight people, Gannet's Sea King, moved in, commanded by Lt Mike Paulet. LACMN Kev Regan was winched on to Riverdance's deck – listing at 45° – and lifted people into the safety of the helicopter two at a time.

"In my 12-year career, this is one of the toughest rescues I've been involved in," said Lt Paulet (now based at RNAS Culdrose).

"The stakes were really high. We knew that time was of the essence and that we were dealing with scared people, as well as dreadful conditions."

He stressed: "This was not a solo effort. It was teamwork at its best and most crucial; we had lives to save and that's exactly what we did."

Lt Paulet earns the Air Force Cross for his actions that night; LACMN Regan was jointly awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal for his Riverdance bravery and another rescue the summer before.

The leading hand was winched down into Loch Long where a man, high on drugs and drink, had been for a good 25 minutes.

He fought every attempt by the airman to pluck him out of the water, fighting LACMN Regan. The swimmer was eventually exhausted by his combative efforts and could eventually be hauled into the Sea King – a difficult task as he was essentially a dead weight. Once in the Sea King, LACMN Regan administered emergency first aid.

Fellow aircrewman PO Daz Craig receives the

Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air for saving two climbers on one of the most difficult parts of Ben Nevis, Tower Scoop.

Back in February last year, one mountaineer fell 200ft down a sheer ice wall, still attached to his fellow climber by a single rope. Beneath him was a 3,500ft drop.

Because he was close to the rock face, the Sea King had to maintain a high hover and PO Craig was winched 150ft down to assess the wounded man – who had suffered a broken arm and leg.

Despite being injured himself as he bumped and scraped the jagged rock face, the senior rating persisted with the rescue, guiding the terrified climber and his partner into the helicopter.

Also on the treacherous slopes of Ben Nevis, in May 2007 one of Gannet's Sea Kings was called to rescue three men trapped on a ledge near Tower Ridge – out of reach of teams on the ground.

For six hours the helicopter struggled in darkness, flying into the teeth of a blizzard. Four times the helicopter pulled back to regroup before making a fresh attempt, finally rescuing not just the three stranded climbers, but also the 12 members of the mountain rescue team.

Lt Cdr Martin Lanni receives the Air Force Cross and Lt Cdr Martin 'Florry' Ford the Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air for their part in that challenging rescue.

Gannet's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Bryan Nicholas said the unit had rather been taken aback by the awards.

"This must be just about unheard of – such a high proportion of a unit amassing such a large clutch of honours at the same time," he added.

"I really am incredibly proud of these men and the dedication and determination which they have shown in the face of substantial adversity."

"All the rescues were very different, but one thing they had in common was that they saved lives – and they risked their own to ensure that the outcome was positive."



1980S – MARINE ENGINEER OFFICER LT CDR CHRIS MCCLEMENT (IN WHITE) IN SCEPTRE'S CONTROL ROOM (EVIDENTLY WITH ONE OF DEXY'S MIDNIGHT RUNNERS...)



2000S – MARINE ENGINEER OFFICER LT CDR DUNCAN MCCLEMENT (IN WHITE) IN SCEPTRE'S CONTROL ROOM (AND NO 80S POPSTERS IN SIGHT...)



● HMS Cornwall illuminated while alongside in Avonmouth

Canine nine nine for Cornwall

BEWARE the enemy within – as HMS Cornwall found when she sailed up the Severn.

The frigate found herself infested with terrorists who threatened to wage biological warfare against the ship's company.

Such was the scenario for Exercise Salamanca, a police-RN security 'work out' aboard HMS Cornwall in Avonmouth.

The ice cream frigate is undergoing eight weeks of Operational Sea Training under those exacting lot down at FOST.

Part of the OST programme is to test a ship's company ability to host VIPs and the public – hence the weekend in the West Country port.

But this visit had the added twist of an anti-terror exercise – with members of Bristol URNU posing as the foe.

They filed aboard the ship posing as tourists, then began to cause mayhem in a series of scenarios from simple protests and demonstrations to a full-scale terrorist attack with the threat of toxic warfare.

It took armed ship's company to dislodge the foe – aided by firearms and chemical and biological containment officers from Avon and Somerset Constabulary, plus Rocky and Blade.

No, they're not Gladiators but two firearms support dogs – in fact this was the first time such canines have been used on a British warship.

The dogs are sent ahead of the search teams; they're specially trained to root out – and bring down – armed and dangerous suspects.

"Rocky and Blade were completely unfazed by their new surroundings," said Lt Cdr Alex Kendrick, Cornwall's weapons engineer officer.

"That's more than can be said for the quartermaster on the gangway when the dogs took a keen interest in the rifle he was carrying."

Once aboard, the combined dog-police-matlot onslaught brought an end to the terrorists' posturing.

"We rarely get the opportunity to go one step further and practise with the emergency services on how we can work best together to safeguard the ship and her crew," said principal warfare officer Lt Cdr Matt Dodds.

For the police, Salamanca was a useful run-out to test methods in the event a merchantman was ever hijacked in the docks.

And for team Cornwall, lessons from the exercise are now being distributed around the RN to show how sailors and police can work together to cope with the terrorist threat.

Sceptre's nuclear family

AFTER ten months out of action, Britain's oldest active submarine is back for her curtain call.

HMS Sceptre is ready for the final 18 months of a career which goes back three decades following a multi-million pound revamp.

All Britain's nuclear boats must undergo a RAMP (Revalidation and Assisted Maintenance Period) – a sort of service/mini refit roughly every three years.

The revamp allows engineers to strip equipment and get at parts not normally accessible, while weapons and warfare systems receive a tweak and the men in white coats conduct a thorough inspection to determine that the last of the Swiftsure boats is fit to resume duties.

Which she is. The boat is now back at sea conducting mock torpedo firings, safety drills and operational training as she works up to take her place in the front-line fleet for the final time.

"I've been immensely impressed with the engineering support from Babcock and the efforts of my ship's company in getting Sceptre ready to commence the final years of service," said CO Cdr Steve Waller.

The boat entered service in early 1978 and will pay off late next year as (most probably) the oldest operational nuclear boat in the world. She is most certainly the oldest ocean-going warship in the RN inventory (and pipped as the longest-serving vessel only by HMS Victory...).

Among the hundreds of deeps who've served in Sceptre during those three decades was one Lt Cdr Chris McClement, the boat's marine engineer officer from July 1983 until April 1985.

And among the people he invited aboard during his tenure was six-year-old Duncan McClement... now Lt Cdr Duncan McClement... HMS Sceptre's very last marine engineer officer.

It is not unusual for sailors to follow in their father's footsteps. It is, however, rather more unusual to find the son performing the same job in the same ship a generation later – not least because there aren't too many ships with careers lasting more than a quarter of century.

"Both Sceptre and I have come a long way since I first stepped foot on her as a six-year-old with Dad and I am sure we will have an enjoyable, if hard working, time over the next few years. Hopefully some of his advice will still be relevant 25 years later!" said Duncan.

Little rest for Trenchant...

FOR ten of the past 12 months, one submarine has been prowling the oceans of the world – silently, stealthily.

HMS Trenchant could be found (or, more accurately speaking, was playing being hard to find) in the North Atlantic, Med, Arctic, North Sea, Seychelles, Gulf and Indian Ocean.

And she appeared on the telly. Five aspiring submarine COs joined the T-boat for Perisher, filmed in part by Sky News.

Trenchant sailed initially in February 2008 for a very varied five months away, which included working with RN skimmers exercising in Norway, dropping in on the Dutch in Den Helder, and hosting the Teacher and the Perisher hopefuls in home waters.

After a spell of summer leave and maintenance in Devonport, the hunter-killer left home once more, this time bound for east of Suez for four months – which took her away from Blighty over the festive period.

During that deployment, runs ashore were enjoyed at Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates and at Mahe in the Seychelles, in company with RFA Diligence.

Trenchant passed numerous significant milestones during the demanding ten-month period, none more so than in January.

Twenty-one years after commissioning, the reactor powered the Devonport-based boat over the half a million miles barrier.

... or for HMS Somerset

WHEN not being targeted by members of her own ship's company (see page 4), frigate HMS Somerset has been knuckling down to life with the Taurus task force.

The ship has been working closely with her Devonport-based sister Argyll and France's Dupleix as the escorts of the amphibious group currently in the eastern Med.

Somerset will be going 'all the way' with the force (ie to the Far East), adding 20,000-plus nautical miles to the odometer in doing so.

Before enjoying a stand-off with the amphibious vessels in Malta's Grand Harbour, eight days of intense work-up were arranged.

That saw a Seawolf missile shoot and a workout for both her 2050 and 2087 sonars scanning the ocean for submarines.

It has been a non-stop 2009 for Somerset's ship's company; there was little break for the ship before she sailed on Taurus 09.

Before departing Devonport in mid-February she squeezed in five and a half weeks of 'directed continuation training' under the banner of FOST – basically specialised instruction geared towards the amphibious deployment.



● (From l-r) Mne 'Mick' Laski – "an asset to the Corps"; Cpl Tom Gaden – "a natural leader"; Paul Upton – "one of life's true gentlemen"; Rifleman Jamie Gunn – "never too tired to 'crack on'"

'See you in the Big Man's bar'

THE ongoing struggle with the Taliban in southern Afghanistan has claimed the lives of four men serving with 3 Commando Brigade.

Royal Marine 'Mick' Laski died during a fire-fight with insurgents while three soldiers serving with 1 Rifles, the Army battalion attached to the green berets, fell victim to a single bomb blast.

Mne Michael 'Mick' Laski was on patrol with Yankee Company, 45 Commando, when the troops were subjected to heavy – and accurate – enemy fire.

The 21-year-old Liverpoolian was caught in open ground and struck by a Taliban bullet as he and his comrades returned fire. He never regained consciousness.

Mne Laski was on his second tour of duty in Afghanistan. He deployed almost immediately to Helmand in 2006 after passing out of Lymington and returned last autumn as a newly-qualified signals specialist.

He was a passionate motorcycle buff, an enthusiastic rather than accomplished dancer and, given his Merseyside roots, comrades said he was full of banter.

"He was always reminding me how elite all Scousers are compared to the rest of the world," said fellow signaller Mne Karl Neave.

"Mick was a true professional when on the ground, getting amongst it with the lads, a job he was proud of and loved doing."

Mne Mark Goldsbury, also in Yankee Company's signals detachment, added: "He was the most professional man I've worked with and there was never a dull moment, whether it was him spinning his run-ashore dits or giving advice on what car or motorbike to buy."

"Mick was an asset to the Corps. Rest in peace, mate. See

you in the Big Man's bar."

Cpl Tom Gaden, L/Cpl Paul Upton and Rifleman Jamie Gunn of 1st Battalion The Rifles all died of their wounds after an explosion wrecked their vehicle during a patrol in the Gereshk district of central Helmand.

All three men were working with one of the 'omelette' teams training and assisting Afghan forces and were conducting a joint Anglo-Afghan patrol when they were fatally wounded.

"It has been a bitter blow," said Lt Col Joe Cavanagh, Commanding Officer 1 Rifles. "Of all of the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams, Tom Gaden's was one of the tightest knit."

Cpl Gaden from Taunton had served his country since 2002, serving in Cyprus and Iraq, in particular alongside the Naval Transition Team at Umm Qasr. He was, said his CO Capt Rich Camp, "an exceptional NCO and a natural leader."

"The loss of Tom is a crushing blow to the team, professionally and personally. He was a close friend to us all and held in high regard across the regiment."

L/Cpl Paul 'Uppers' Upton, 31, had been in the Army for more than a decade – as a regular and reservist, before re-enlisting at the end of 2007.

His experience in civvy street and his maturity was appreciated by comrades – as was his artistic talent.

"Uppers was a keen – and talented – artist who spent a lot of his spare time with his sketch book. The results were outstanding – he had a waiting list for tattoo designs across the base," Capt Camp said.

"He was a genuinely kind person, one of life's true gentlemen. He always had time to chat to the lads and was the centre of a lot of morale in the team."

Twenty-one-year-old Jamie Gunn from Monmouth had been



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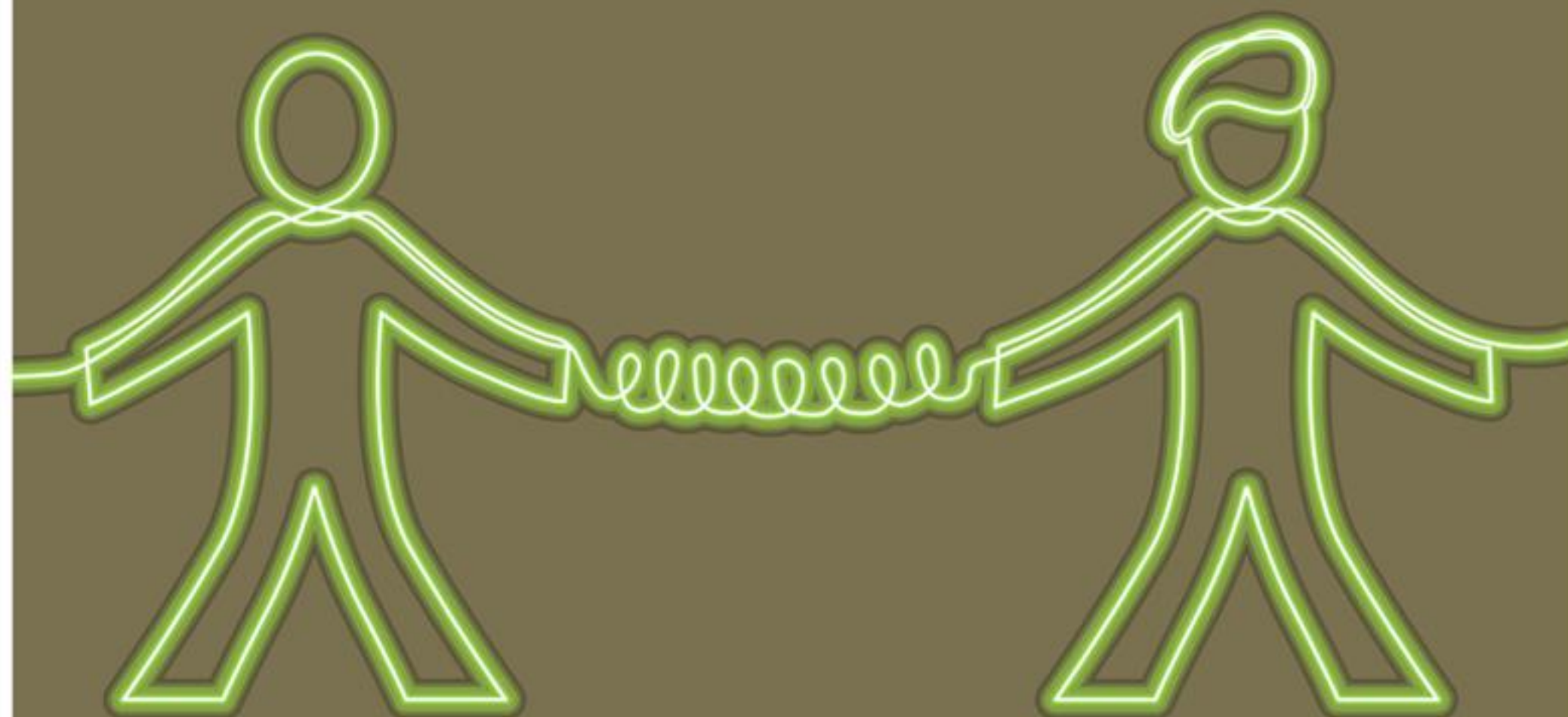
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Lusty goes Jungly

YOU don't have to go to Cyprus and the sunshine to conduct amphibious operations.

No, it's perfectly possible (if a bit chillier...) in the UK.

HMS Illustrious played host to Jungly training squadron 848 NAS to re-learn the art of helicopter insertion.

Lusty is Britain's 'strike carrier', which means for the past few years she's devoted the bulk of her efforts to fixed-wing exercises.

But she can double as a launchpad for Royal Marines (as she did during the Afghanistan campaign of 2001-02).

And with her sister Ark Royal, which is a designated commando carrier, undergoing maintenance, Illustrious stepped up to the line.

Setting a Sea King down on 600ft of flight deck isn't especially hard for our aviators.

So to make things a little trickier for the Commando Helicopter Force fliers, the carrier filled her flight deck with Lynx (847 NAS), Merlins

(824 NAS) and even a Chinook from RAF 18 Sqn.

The Yeovilton airmen spent a fortnight aboard the ship, beginning with the basics and ending with a real-time helicopter assault (members of Lusty's ship's company played the part of Royals as the latter are all busy in Afghanistan and the Med).

"Landing on a big empty flight deck is not as challenging as having to operate around other aircraft, so the additional traffic provided the right exposure to operations from a cramped deck," said Illustrious' 'wings' Commander Air Cdr Mark Deller.

"It also allowed the flight deck teams to refresh their skills with different aircraft types."

Old friends return to the ship this month in the shape of the Naval Strike Wing whose Harriers will be conducting training operations.

After that Lusty gears up for a visit to the Thames at Greenwich as the focal point for Fly Navy 100 celebrations in the capital.



● HMS Portland's Lynx Osprey prepares for the flypast as Aman 2009 draws to a close with an International Fleet Review off Karachi

Pictures: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, FRPU East

Aman at arms

THERE'S never Aman around when you need one...

Unless you're aboard HMS Portland in the Indian Ocean. Aman is Urdu for 'peace' (Obviously - Ed). It's also the name of a biennial international exercise organised by the Pakistanis.

Portland led a small British task force - minehunters HMS Atherstone and Grimsby, supported by RFA Diligence - as the navies of a dozen nations gathered in Karachi for the preliminaries.

There the Devonport-based warship found an old friend, Type 21 frigate HMS Avenger - now PNS Tippu Sultan and Portland's host for the duration of the exercise.

Aman began with a series of 'getting to know you' events in the Pakistani port from receptions and cultural events to holding tours and sporting fixtures.

With the preliminaries dispensed with and all plans for the war games fixed, the multi-national fleet headed out to sea.

For the Brits, Aman was business as usual - the emphasis of the exercise was, as the Chief of the Pakistani Naval Staff Admiral Noman Bashir explained, on "combating and countering all illegal activities, particularly in the north Arabian Sea - gateway to the hub of the world's energy resources."

The admiral was delighted by the sight of a wealth of ships before him: "Your presence not only shows our common resolve to promote peace but also speaks of our commitment and efforts towards this common goal."

Hunt-class HMS Atherstone (pictured below with Diligence) and Sandown HMS Grimsby linked up with the Pakistani and French navies to work together by day on 'shipy stuff' - operating as a group, gunnery, ship handling and manoeuvres - and by night on the core business of mine hunting.

With their depth of experience in mine warfare east of Suez this past decade, the Crazy A and Grimsby knuckled down to their tasks with relish - and found every mine laid for them.

"This was an excellent example of how to run an exercise," enthused Atherstone's CO Lt Cdr Matt Bowden. "Pakistan provided first-class training and support for all the mine countermeasures participants."

Meanwhile, back aboard HMS Portland... The frigate was expected to demonstrate her skill at counter-piracy operations and protecting maritime infrastructure (as were all the other vessels involved in Aman 09).

For the gunnery exercise, the 'killer tomatoes' - huge red inflatables - were wheeled out and promptly shredded by the combined firepower of the fleet.

Aman reached its climax with an international fleet review and flypast in front of Pakistan's Defence Minister Ahmad Mukhtar.

"To be part of the main fleet review was a very special experience - many sailors have never seen so many ships at sea in formation before," said Lt Cdr Mark Hocking, Portland's weapon engineer officer.

The exercise was capped by a 'cameo appearance' from the American flat-top USS Theodore Roosevelt which appeared right at the very end to take part in the final photoshoot.

Even then, however, Aman 09 was not quite over. The ships returned to Karachi for a flag-lowering ceremony, extensive debriefing and (best of all) a food and culture show.

The food? Traditional dishes from all the participating nations so British, Malay, French, Pakistani, Chinese, Australian, Bangladeshi and American grub.

And the culture? Enter Not Under Command, Portland's rock band playing to its largest audience

yet (and one which didn't entirely understand the nuances of RN humour...).

Thus did the curtain come down on Aman. Portland resumed her anti-piracy mission and Atherstone, Grimsby and Diligence made for the Gulf.

"Aman was, without doubt, a huge success," said Portland's CO Cdr Tim Henry. "The ability to operate with each other - demonstrated during the sea phase - is vital if we are all to work together to ensure the safe passage of merchant shipping and trade in this region - and around the globe."

Portland arrived for Aman after her 'operational stand-off' - a chance for some of the ship's company to let their hair down or relax with family, and a chance for the ship herself to undergo some much-needed maintenance.

For the first time in more than six months, many of Portland's systems were switched off allowing engineers to give them a good servicing.

Those not involved in the maintenance work succumbed to Dubai's many temptations - scuba diving, adventurous training, even a few days in the desert living with locals and 'sandboarding' (snowboarding but with sand, not snow).

You didn't have to go out into the desert to see sand, however. Quite a lot was deposited on Portland. Half-way through her maintenance spell a sand storm whipped up and left a layer of fine yellow dust on the Type 23's upper decks.

Also a hive of activity on the Dubai quayside was the recently-arrived QE2.

The liner is (slowly) being converted into a luxury hotel and conference facility in the emirate, but that didn't stop Portland's sailors from being invited aboard the world's most famous cruise ship.



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● Brace, brace, brace... St Albans' bridge team prepares for impact during a week of air defence exercises off the Italian coast and (left) a rather impressive bow shot of the frigate, as seen from her sea boat

Pictures: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East

The grand tour

THERE'S the Grand Tour – Paris, Geneva, Venice, Pisa, Turin, Florence, Rome, Naples, Sicily.

And there's the HMS St Albans Grand Tour – La Spezia, Pisa, Rome, Sicily, Alexandria – carried out at a rather swifter pace and with not an effete dandy in sight...

The first month of the frigate's spell with a NATO task group has been a whistlestop tour of historic sites, interspersed with getting to know the rest of the international task group.

The ship is attached to Standing NATO Maritime Group 2, six warships from Allied nations with a singular aim: the safeguard of the seas.

HMS St Albans was introduced to the rest of the group in the northern Italian port of La Spezia.

There can be no better way to get to know your friends than over a pint...

...so an invitation to a 'beer call' aboard FGS Berlin was warmly accepted (*funny that – Ed*).

Those not suffering the after-effects of the Germans' hospitality the next day headed 40 miles south to Pisa and an obligatory visit to the eponymous leaning tower.

Next stop, Rome – after a week of fairly intensive air defence exercises and the first opportunity to work in earnest with the Italian-led task force.

Right, that's enough about the military aspect. Back to

sightseeing. After that week-long workout, the task force needed a rest and headed for Civitavecchia.

It's not on the Grand Tour (ports invariably are not the most attractive of destinations). But 50 minutes by train from Civitavecchia lies the Eternal City, beloved by those 18th and 19th-Century romantics... and 21st-Century matelots.

The Saints (there's no vying with HMS Southampton for the nickname now the latter has paid off...) had a weekend to catch the Coliseum, Trevi Fountain, St Peter's, the Forum and other sites from Antiquity. A weekend is not long enough for the true Roman experience and many sailors plan to return with their families later in the deployment.

From Rome to Sicily and two weeks of hunting submarines (made rather easier for St Albans by her new 2087 sonar, hailed as the world's finest for locating underwater threats).

Noble Manta is one of the largest anti-submarine exercises staged by the world's navies.

Six boats – one British nuclear-powered and five Allied diesel-electrics – played the foe, while the NATO forces, boosted by an additional three vessels and maritime patrol aircraft went a-hunting.

"The exercise was a great chance to test our new and super-effective sonar – and to see just what this brings to the party," said Lt Cdr Andy Brown, St Albans' weapons engineer officer.

"It would be fair to say that we were all pretty excited and dead keen to get stuck in."

Stuck in – and perhaps tuck in too; Pancake Day landed slap bang in the middle of Noble Manta, and with the ship's company in defence watches (six hours on, six hours off), a break from the routine was most welcome.

The chefs spent more than four hours tossing in the galley. By the time they were done, more than 250 pancakes had been devoured (and, by our reckoning, some sailors had more than one as there are only 187 souls aboard...).

Noble Manta ended with the force heading for the small port of Augusta on the western shores of Sicily.

"Nestled amongst the myriad of chemical factories and power stations that stretch for miles along this coast, at first it didn't seem like the ideal spot for much rest and relaxation," said Lt Cdr Brown.

But scratch away at the surface... Augusta lies between the historic cities of Catania and Syracuse – both of which proved popular destinations for the Brits.

But not as popular as the slopes of Mount Etna, Europe's most active volcano.

Despite the volcanic activity, the mountain is popular with

skiers – including a good few from St Albans. Geographically/historically-minded matelots visited the more (but not too) active parts of Etna before dropping in on the historic town Taormina, perched on the north-eastern edge of the volcano's slopes.

And so to sea once more.

Since late 2001, NATO has been running Operation Active Endeavour – a purge of pirates, terrorists, human traffickers and other criminal elements using the Middle Sea.

Active Endeavour is a constant mission, but at times the NATO regional HQ in Naples commits extra ships to the 'sweep' for what it calls 'surges'.

Which is why St Albans found herself patrolling a strip of sea between Crete and Libya.

"The basic idea behind surge operations is to saturate a known 'trafficking' route with warships, in order to build up the fullest picture possible of what is going on," explained Cdr Adrian Pierce, St Albans' CO.

That means 'hailing' passing vessels, inquiring about their identity and activity; suspicious vessels may be boarded to check their cargo and paperwork.

This leg of the Grand Tour ended in the land of the pharaohs – Alexandria to be precise, Pearl of the Mediterranean.

Once home to Alexander the Great (hence the name...) and Cleopatra – though not at the same time – for many of the ship's company Egypt's second city was a first taste of life beyond the borders of Europe.

"It offers an interesting taste of an Eastern culture – albeit in a city very close to Europe," said Lt Cdr Brown.

Junior sailors quickly mastered the art of haggling, although there were words of caution from one of the frigate's more experienced sailors, who imparted: "The impoverished street urchins smile most broadly while their hand is rifling through your now considerably-lighter pocket..."

Some ship's company found time to travel to Cairo, a little over 100 miles away.

Slightly closer to the port – some 70 miles west along the coast – lies El Alamein, a fairly drab railway halt – but a site which takes its place among the pantheon of most hallowed British battlefields.

A sizeable number of sailors paid their respects at the Commonwealth war cemetery and on the battlefield where Rommel's drive on the Egyptian capital turned to dust.



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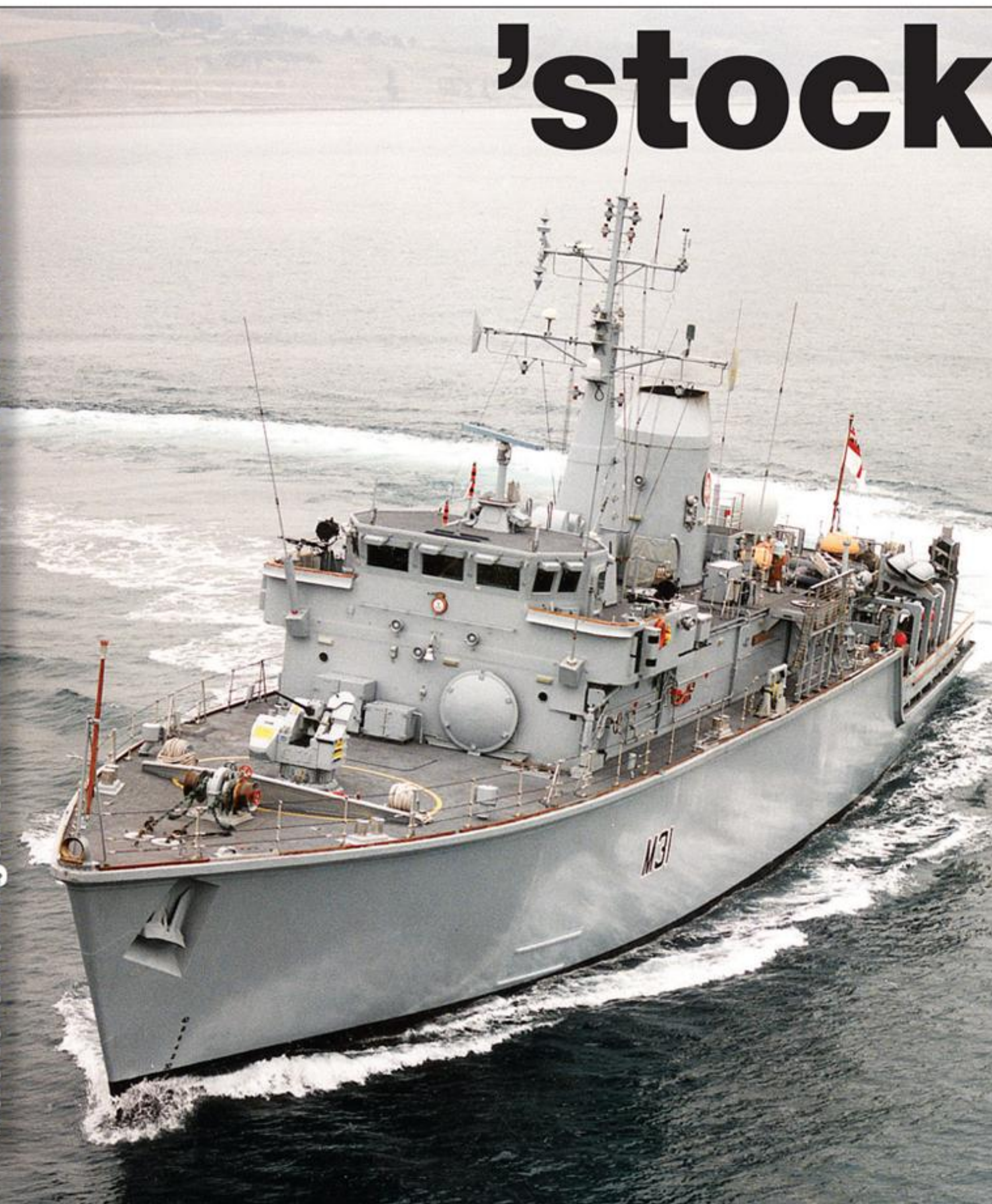


Battle Honours

North Sea.....1941-45
Atlantic.....1942-44
Normandy.....1944
Northern Gulf.....1990-91

Class: Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessel
Pennant number: M31
Builder: Vosper Thornycroft, Woolston
Laid down: July 12 1979
Launched: January 22 1981
Commissioned: June 16 1982
Displacement: 750 tons
Length: 197ft (60 metres)
Beam: 33ft (10 metres)
Draught: 10ft (2.9 metres)
Speed: 15kts
Complement: 45
Propulsion: 2 x Ruston-Paxman 9-59K Deltic diesels generating 1,900hp; 1 x Deltic 9-55B diesel generating 780hp; 1 x bow thruster
Sensors: Sonar 2193 minehunting sonar
Armament: Seafox mine disposal system; 1 x 30mm gun with rang of 5½ miles; 2 x Oerlikon 20mm guns; 1 x minigun

Facts and figures



'stock is rising

MANOEUVRING nimbly – as is her wont – this is what veteran minehunter HMS Cattistock should be doing just about now.

After a winter in dry dock and maintenance in Portsmouth, the 27-year-old mine countermeasures vessel is currently undergoing two months of trials and tests.

They're just the first steps on the long road to Operational Sea Training in Scotland in September and ultimately deployment to the Gulf...

...somewhere the ship's company have come to know quite well. Back in September 2007 Cattistock's sailors swapped places with their counterparts from HMS Atherstone, then took the Crazy A out to the Gulf.

They finally returned to their true ship last summer, leaving Atherstone in the safe hands of another Hunt-class crew.

And once reunited with Cattistock, her 45-strong ship's company made sure she was busy.

They took her to Sark – the first visit by an RN vessel to the tiny Channel Island in a quarter of a century.

Then it was down to Ilhavo in Portugal (between Porto and Lisbon) to escort the Tall Ships who were bound ultimately for Madeira to mark the 500th anniversary of its first settlement.

And then it was on to the anchorage of Villagarcia de Arousa in north-west Spain – a popular haunt of the RN in the 19th Century, and a regular stop for the Mighty Hood on her way to and from the Med.

On the way back to the waters of the British Isles, Cattistock joined islanders on Guernsey as they paid their respects at the annual

Charybdis commemorations. Locals defied the Nazi authorities and attended the funerals of sailors from HM Ships Charybdis and Limbourne in the autumn of 1943 – and continue to honour the fallen to this day.

As for Cattistock, after a spell of fishery protection duties off the west coast of the UK and a short visit to Liverpool, she returned to Pompey for that maintenance...

...and many of her ship's company headed to the Bavarian Alps and the RN's outdoor centre for some adventurous training and winter sports.

Those are activities which circumstances denied their predecessors in the second Cattistock, a Hunt-class destroyer which saw action through most of WW2, notably in support of the vast Overlord operation.

Whilst attempting to intercept a German convoy between Fecamp and Dieppe, she was pounded by German coastal batteries.

The enemy shells killed her CO and knocked out her main armament and radar, but seven weeks later, she was back in action after rapid repairs at Chatham.

Her final engagement in the war was to sink a midget submarine off Zeebrugge. She was laid up in Reserve at Devonport in 1946 and then finally scrapped in 1957.

The Cattistock lineage begins in 1917 with a 730-ton minesweeper which served in the North Sea during and after WW1, then headed to the Gulf of Finland. She was sold for breaking up in 1923.

photographic memories

WATCHING me, watching you... Our April image from the photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum shows a close encounter of the Soviet kind. A Russian Krupny-class guided-missile destroyer – as yet unidentified – shadows carrier HMS Hermes during NATO exercises in the Mediterranean in April 1970. Sailors in the respective ships line the decks for a glimpse of their 'foe' in a typical Cold War stand-off. With wings folded in the foreground is a Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer S.2 of 801 NAS. (Neg A35274)

■ THIS photograph – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.60

Lt Cdr Edward Boyle VC

THE mood in the admiral's cabin aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth on the evening of Tuesday April 27 1915 was rather dark.

The three-day-old land battle to seize control of the Dardanelles had, if not miscarried, then fallen far short of expectations.

The Turks were doggedly holding on to the peninsula – and thwarting the Allied push towards the Bosphorus.

Perhaps, senior officers argued, they might be dislodged if their supply line through the Sea of Marmara was cut.

The Marmara – 4,300 square miles of sea – was not merely a vital line of communication for the Turkish war effort, but regarded by Constantinople very much as 'mare nostrum'.

The head of the Silent Service, Cdre Roger Keyes – whose energy and determination for action rather surpassed his intellect – was determined one of his boats could run amok in the Dardanelles.

Now, on the evening of April 27, he had proof that they could. HMAS AE2 had slipped through the 36 miles of narrow, mined and heavily-patrolled waters and reached the Marmara.

Roger Keyes was buoyant. "It is an omen," he told the gloomy faces debating the land battle.

As he spoke, another of his boats was making its way gingerly up the Dardanelles, HMS E14.

Her crew held out little hope. Knowing nothing of AE2's feat, they set off to run the gauntlet expecting to be sunk or captured.

Their commanding officer shared their fears. He had been among the naysayers a fortnight before.

Tall, dark, his hair greying despite his mere 32 years, Edward Courtney Boyle was a rather introspective character who came alive around technology – submarines and motorbikes were his passion.

He had a decade's experience in submarines. He knew their strengths – and their limitations.

Thorough preparation was the key to Boyle's success. He knew every inch of the Dardanelles – he had even flown a reconnaissance mission with pioneering naval aviator Charles Samson.

And so it was that after 17 hours – 16 of them submerged – HMS E14 found herself in the Marmara.

Once there, Edward Boyle was determined that the psychological effect of E14 in the Turkish sea was as great as her military impact.

Where possible, E14 sailed the Marmara on the surface to scare the enemy (which she did).

Boyle rigged a dummy gun on the upper deck, comprising a pipe, an oil drum and a bit of canvas. It was enough to so panic the crew of one Turkish steamer that they ran their ship aground trying to flee.

Yet it was with the torpedo that he scored his greatest successes: a gunboat, a minelayer and finally, as Keyes had intended, a troopship.

The former White Star liner Guj Djemal was bound for Gallipoli, carrying 6,000 troops and a battery of field guns.

The 40-year-old liner would never reach her destination. In the fading light of May 10 – as officers dined – the ship was rocked by a torpedo.

Exactly what happened next is contested. British sources suggest all 6,000 soldiers and their guns joined Guj Djemal at the bottom of the Marmara. Turkish accounts claim the soldiers left the stricken ship in an orderly fashion "without a casualty".

At any rate, E14 had scored a tremendous propaganda victory.

Just how big a victory Boyle learned when he brought his boat back through the Dardanelles and was cheered as he passed through the massed lines of the Anglo-French fleet mustered off Cape Helles.

Boyle would twice return to the Marmara to run amok – spending 70 days in all targeting Turkish shipping.

He has rather been eclipsed by the next submariner to force the Dardanelles, Martin Nasmith.

Boyle possessed no less pluck, no less skill, no less resourcefulness than his fellow scourge of the Marmara. He was immediately recommended for the VC by Keyes, who believed this solitary boat had "disarranged the whole Sea of Marmara".



Integrated yet distinct

IT'S a difficult trick to pull off – seamlessly integrating into an organisation yet retaining your individuality and character.

But it's a feat which the top man in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary believes his team has achieved.

Cdre Bill Walworth sees the two sides of the same coin as being the key factors in how the RFA is currently developing, and they have made the RFA a much better outfit for it.

"We are an integrated element of the Royal Navy – that works all the way through the organisation," the Commodore told *Navy News*.

"But we also have a very strong identity of which we are very proud. We are very proud of what we do, for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines and for wider defence."

Cdre Walworth traces the strands of integration back to the Falklands, when it became obvious that officers and ratings had to have a greater understanding of what was going on in other Task Group ships to fulfil the group's potential.

That involved aligning areas of training, for example, but other benefits accrued from the new approach.

"The RFA became much more knowledgeable about operations

and started to develop contacts and friendships with Royal Navy personnel who understood what we were trying to achieve and needed to do," said Cdre Walworth.

"Before that it had been a different RFA, spending significantly less time at sea as integrated members of task groups.

"We hope we now put ships to sea that understand the business and that complement the task group, rather than are just bolted on to the side.

"And our people very much recognise the importance of what they do for defence – and if they are not sure, Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Stanhope regularly reminds us of the importance of the RFA to the ability of the RN to deploy worldwide."

He added: "We are in the middle of a large-scale programme, Project Darwin, to make ourselves more efficient, to be better able to provide what the RN needs from its sustainability ships.

"We want to make sure our outputs are entirely aligned with the RN and our processes are transparent and coherent."

Cdre Walworth continued:

"We are not just about supplying fuel and stores – we are now also a major

contributor to the maritime security field.

"Our ships regularly go to sea with aircraft embarked, particularly Merlin, and the LSD(A)s were designed specifically for Royal Marines and amphibious warfare.

"Most of our seamen and many of our supply ratings are trained gunners, and these days we can frequently carry out tasks which in the past were carried out by warships.

"Let's not beat around the bush; we are here to help the Royal Navy fight and win, and our people understand that.

"Instead of standing on the touchline watching, in today's battlespace there is no touchline.

"We have had to learn how to operate in that environment."

Thus you find RFA tankers Wave Ruler and Wave Knight, as well as landing ship Largs Bay on duty on Atlantic Patrol Task (North), and RFA Cardigan Bay on station between the oil terminals in the Northern Gulf – "two tasks we are very proud of but not, in the past, carried out by RFAs.

"While I may be the head of the service, perched in my ivory tower in Portsmouth, I have spent most of my life at sea, and I am conscious of the fact that in an organisation as individualistic and diverse and full of so many interesting characters and individuals, with a great range of characters, there are a lot of views out there but everybody is out to do the best job they can highly professionally."

And the commodore believes that for recruitment purposes, a civilian mariner

could not ask for a better job in terms of variety, satisfaction and rewards.

"Training, career opportunities, job satisfaction at a young age – and potential to be tremendous fun, it's all here," he said.

"The guys can join in with the RN in terms of sailing, sport and the like; if they want, it is all available to us."

The coming years hold out the promise of new ships – tankers and logistics vessels, including those to support the new carriers, are the priority – as well as modified personnel procedures including recruitment and training through closer links with the Navy.

In the shorter term, Cdre Walworth is visiting ships and establishments to find out what the RFA people are thinking and their views on Project Darwin.

"I have made it a point of my period in this chair to listen to what the guys say and try to see what can be done," he said.

"There's no silver bullet, but they can be very proud of what we are doing and their role in the security of the country."

The RFA Flotilla

■ The core role of the RFA is to supply the RN at sea with food, fuel, ammunition and spares to maintain operations away from home ports.

■ It is manned by civilians – the trained requirement is just under 2,500 – but the ships are owned by the Ministry of Defence and the organisation answers to the Commander-in-Chief Fleet.

■ The current RFA Flotilla consists of 16 ships, 12 of them tankers, supply or support ships and the four most recent – the 16,160-tonne Bay-class – are amphibious landing ships.



● Fast fleet tanker RFA Wave Ruler prepares to replenish at sea with Type 23 frigate HMS Portland
Picture: LA(Phot) Owen King

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'Credit crunch' Navy Days

PEOPLE in the West Country – and beyond – will get the first chance to see their Navy up close and personal in three years this summer.

After a lengthy hiatus, Navy Days returns to Devonport Naval Base – same venue, but with a slightly different date.

Organisers promise the biggest Royal Navy public event of the year, hope new destroyer HMS Daring will be on show, and have frozen many of the admission prices at the 2006 level given the economic crisis.

Typically held over the August Bank Holiday weekend (when most of the RN is still on summer leave), Navy Days this year is being staged over the first weekend in September (when much of the RN is back – and when the spectacle doesn't clash with as many major public events).

The last similar showcase for the Fleet – Meet Your Navy in Portsmouth (which wasn't Navy Days, organisers stressed) – drew 35,000 visitors over three days last summer.

Navy Days (which isn't Meet Your Navy but will incorporate some of its characteristics, notably the chance to, er, 'meet your navy') drew the same number of visitors to Plymouth back in 2006. This summer organisers are hoping to reach similar figures over September 5 and 6.

"We are sympathetic to the financial constraints everyone is under with the credit crunch are so we're keeping prices for certain tickets the same as three years ago," said Capt Charlie King, Devonport's Captain of the Base.

In view of the RN's global commitments, none of the RN and RFA major warship attendees are set in stone yet, but Capt King hopes foreign vessels will also take part – as they have done at previous Navy Days.

What is definite is that the Royal Marines will be conducting a rescue on the river; a substantial air display will take place to celebrate 100 years of naval aviation; the RN Raiders parachute display team will be dropping in; and there will be an exhibition celebrating the future Navy – HMS Astute, the next-generation carriers and the Type 45 destroyers.

"We are fully committed to staging the best event we can for the people of Plymouth, the south west and further afield," Capt King added.

"We can promise an exciting event and the chance to meet the personnel who crew the ships and submarines and the Royal Marines who have combat and other experience from Afghanistan."

Prices are: one-day pass: adults £14, pensioners £12, children £3; two-day pass: adults £20, pensioners £18, children £6. Passes for groups of eight are available for £12 per person for one day and £18 ahead for two days. They're available on 08445 787878.

Visit www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navydays for more details.

Helmand in focus

THE first exhibition in the Royal Marines Museum's new dedicated facility looks at the Corps' mission in Afghanistan.

Return to Helmand explores the role of the Royals in current and recent operations in Afghanistan, how they have adapted to deal with the conflict and the many demands placed on the commandos.

Using startling photography, video footage and personal histories, a series of paintings commissioned from war artist Gordon Rushmer, plus a range of exhibits brought back from theatre, a variety of topics are highlighted.

For details see www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk or telephone 023 9281 9385.

Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper, HMS Albion



GLEAMING under the artificial light, this is the impressive sight of assault ship HMS Albion moments before the waters lapped once more around her freshly-painted hull.

The Devonport-based amphibious ship's dry dock – No.8 for the record – was flooded up last month, a major milestone in her £26m refit, bringing the curtain down on the first phase of the demanding project.

Here comes the science bit...

The process of flooding the dry dock saw 60,000 tonnes of water pour in over 2½ hours.

Albion was supported on a system of blocks that spread the ship's weight evenly.

Throughout the refloating process, regular inspections were made to ensure that the many hull openings remained watertight.

Which they did evidently...

Albion entered dock last November at the start of the first significant maintenance programme since she was launched in March 2001 (and if you want to know how her hull looked before the paint job, flick to page 7 of our January 2009 edition)

Work on the 17,000-tonne ship has included the refitting of her propellers, shafts and rudders, the application of over 25,000 litres of environmentally-friendly paint and improvements to accommodation.

Cdr Geoff Wintle, HMS Albion's Commander Logistics, said: "This is the first period of maintenance in a dry dock since she was commissioned and is essentially routine maintenance, but amounts to a significant work package."

"There are no major enhancements, but she has had a special re-paint and improvements to the accommodation for the Royal Marines and sailors."

He added: "HMS Albion is therefore, newly improved and will be ready later in the year for her next operational period."

Once out of the dry dock Albion did not have far to go – she was moved to an adjacent basin where Babcock Marine are continuing the refit.

The ship's company is expected to move back on board towards the end of this month, and the work completed in summer.

Albion will then embark on a series of trials and training which will prepare her for resuming the role of amphibious flagship (a title currently held by HMS Bulwark) early in 2010.

Paint your (battle) wagon

Go to hell! Big Cig is damned



IN Roman times, one of the mythical gates to the underworld was reported to be at Solfatara, a volcanic crater just outside Naples.

Pumping out superheated gases at temperatures up to 320°F, with the smell of rotten eggs filling the air, and pools of bubbling mud, it's easy to see why the place was feared.

As part of National No Smoking Day, the British Forces Clinic in Naples decided that Solfatara was the perfect place to banish Big Cig once and for all.

Wearing his pusser's foulie, SMO Surg Lt Cdr Matthew Turner braved the intense heat, and with his best schoolboy Latin curse, he consigned Big Cig to a fiery end.

The senior medical officer is a sworn enemy of tobacco – he won an award last year for the best use of a Big Cig costume.

The clinic in Naples provides medical care to about 1,000 UK military personnel and their families in Italy, Spain and Portugal, and has been very active in its No Smoking Day campaign.

Senior Nursing Officer Lt Cdr Voz Johnston has been encouraging smokers to "come and have a little chat".

And Health Visitor Dawn Baran has been working with the British school teaching the younger members of the community the dangers

of smoking.

Big Cig was on the receiving end of some fairly harsh treatment closer to home as well.

The errant fag end was spotted near some Hawk training aircraft at RN Air Station Culdrose, but was quickly set upon and soaked with water by two of the Cornish establishment's fire vehicles.

Culdrose's medical centre has an active smoking-cessation clinic, and figures show that in 2008 33 per cent of the base's smokers kicked the habit with the support of the centre.

The medical and dental teams at HMS Raleigh were also active on No Smoking Day, co-opting Big Cig into telling staff at the base of the dangers of smoking.

As well as the serious facts, there were a variety of competitions, including 'Spot the Cig', with staff ringing in for a prize when they spotted the dog-end at various locations.

HMS Collingwood marked the day with a special promotional stand which, as well as pointing out the health issues, also highlighted other ways one could spend the money used for cigarettes.

Smoking rates across the RN are estimated to be 19 per cent, below the national average of 26 per cent.

Gritting in progress

ROOKIE sailors will face a tougher test when they join up to give the RN more 'grit'.

Senior officers and instructors at HMS Raleigh – where all junior ratings receive their basic training – are overhauling the nine-week course to make it more challenging.

It's the latest change rippling through the Senior Service with an increasing emphasis not merely on operations – but operations on land.

Aside from 3 Commando Brigade leading the British presence in Afghanistan currently, sailors comprise a sizeable proportion of its numbers as medics, truck drivers, logistics specialists, intelligence analysts.

All this demands what the Royal Marines possess in abundance but doesn't perhaps come as naturally to sailors. They're not infantry, after all.

The buzzword in RN circles is 'grit' – dogged determination, resolve, toughness. And it should be instilled into a sailor, says Raleigh's Commanding Officer Capt Jonathan Woodcock, on the very first day of their career.

"Trainees come here expecting to be tested – and they should be," he explained.

"There's an increasing drive to foster 'grit' in sailors – putting them under more pressure, making things tougher, taking more risks, as individuals, and as a team."

The captain and his team are adding the finishing touches to their 'grit' programme, but in a nutshell, it's 'more and harder' – more weapons handling, more time in the gym, tougher swimming tests.

"The important thing is that every single trainee will have found parts of the nine-week course difficult and challenging," said Capt Woodcock.

"Take the swimming test for example: a couple of lengths of the pool and treading water for five minutes. Rather than just lying on their backs, we want trainees to try to stand upright in the water."

There is a fine line to tread here. On the one hand you don't want to return to the days of the bawling sergeant major... and on the other you don't want to be fluffy.

"There is no reason why training cannot be tough but at the same time still care for our people. If we don't, then we'll suffer from high leaving rates. We're not running a boot camp."

Not too long ago, much of the attraction of the Senior Service – as reflected by some of its advertising – was still the chance to 'see the world'.

"We don't talk about joining the RN so you can have a good run ashore any more," said Capt Woodcock.

"The message now is: you are joining a fighting force. More and more in training we are demonstrating what seapower is about, showing trainees the sort of operations they will be involved in – and explaining that these operations might not be in a ship."

That's something many of those entering the Torpoint establishment for the first time accept – and expect.

While Generations X and Y may be branded as indifferent, lazy, inactive and other invectives by Fleet Street, motivation is not an issue at Raleigh.

"Youngsters coming through the gates want it hard, they want challenges," said CPO(PT) Sean Childs, one of Raleigh's senior physical training instructors.

"That's the way to succeed, to win."

Trainees join for the life and the lifestyle, says Capt Woodcock – and tell their instructors their ambition is to climb as far up the RN ladder as they can.

"Money is not the issue. I want to do something extra with my life – and have a suitable career," said budding submariner AB(CIS) Anthony Glen.

AB(Sea) Frazer MacLennan who's just beginning his seamanship training, added: "I want to see what I can do. I want to do something hands on, to have the chance to drive a fast boat."



● Rehabilitation's what you need... Stonehouse Division sailors undergoing a therapy session in Raleigh's pool

Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh

It's not the end of the world as we know it

"KEEP smiling and remember you are heading for a great life in the Navy, baby."

Not the words of a song but the last line of a letter by a junior rating, one ET(WE) Simon Butler, pinned to the wall in a block at HMS Raleigh.

It – and a good dozen others on the noticeboard of the mess space – serve as inspiration to comrades unlucky enough to end up Stonehouse Division.

Stonehouse is home to sailors either injured during basic training or those who fail the mandatory RN fitness or swimming tests.

The latter are given four weeks to make the grade, undergoing intensive training to help them pass (although in most cases the issue is more mental than physical). If they've still not reached the standard demanded by the RN after that time, they return to civvy street.

Far more common, however, are trainees injured during those initial nine weeks and who are unable to resume their basic training, let alone begin their specialist instruction in their chosen branches. And there can be no thought of that without passing out of Raleigh.

So what shall we do with a broken sailor?

Well, there's plenty of bespoke physiotherapy, work with the PTIs to keep the trainees' strength up.

But it's the mental battle which is just as important to win. Sailors come through the gates of the Torpoint establishment all set for a life on the Seven Seas.

A few weeks later they find themselves injured, their careers on ice and with no target date in their diaries they can underline.

"Being sent to Stonehouse is seen as a stigma. You don't want to end up here," says AB(CIS(SM)) Anthony Glen.

There should be no stigma whatsoever attached to the junior rating. He broke his ankle and

has spent longer than anyone else in Stonehouse recovering. He didn't give up and neither did the Raleigh staff.

"The medical and PT staff do everything they can to get people fit again. In the end, it's a medical decision. As long as there's a chance of recovery, we keep people in," explains WO1 Joe Royle, in charge of Stonehouse.

"Some people choose to leave – it does get to them. But they're actually very few."

That numbers of convalescents choosing to return to civilian life are low is down to one simple rule: keep 'em busy.

"It's important to keep up the sailors' mental strength – they go through highs and lows. So we find things for them to do."

Some of the tasks can be fairly mundane – sorting the mail or bedding – some can be daunting such as giving presentations or staging debates, and others can be uplifting, such as helping new arrivals coming through the Raleigh gates for the first time, or getting stuck in at Churchtown Farm activity centre near St Austell (a mainstay of Navy News' charity pages...).

And there's a lot of phys.

"Our fitness levels are constantly improving," said AB Glen. "There's a good bunch of lads in here and the staff keep us busy – there's always something to look forward to."

There can be as few as half a dozen sailors convalescing – or as many as 25.

Most are spurred on by notes on the wall of their rest area written by those who gone through the Stonehouse experience – and have resumed their mainstream RN careers (see below).

While being injured initially was a body blow, most of those leaving the division and rejoining mainstream training believe they've become better sailors as a result of the experience.

"I have learned more about myself, learned more about the

RN, about the various jobs and roles, I have had far more exposure to senior personnel than I would otherwise, and I have learned how quickly I can make friends," says AB(Sea) Frazer MacLennan, who dislocated his shoulder and spent eight months getting back to full fitness.

AB Glen adds: "Stonehouse is

about make the best of a difficult – and unwanted – situation."

Their boss agrees. "If these guys are still here after all they've been through, then we're doing something right," says WO1 Royle.

"They leave Stonehouse better prepared mentally and also more determined."

Harry wants to join the Forces just like his Dad.

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- MA Jagers

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- Logs Gallagher

Gaz is a trophy winner

Wiggy breaks SAR record



SAILOR AB 'Gaz' Adam Harbon entered a competition with Barclays Premier Life – and won a day with the Premier League Trophy.

As the sailor is currently a watchkeeper on HMS Victory in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard he was thrilled to show it off to his Naval colleagues.

For most of the day the trophy was on public display at the Victory Gallery of the Royal Naval Museum, much to the delight of visiting Australian tourist Phil Guilfoyle who said: "I'm a keen Arsenal supporter and just visiting the UK for two weeks – so it is a complete surprise. And it's really great to be able to have my photo taken with the Premiership trophy while I'm here."

One of Gaz's main aims of the day was to take the trophy down into the Chiefs' Mess on board Victory – "There's a great team spirit on the ship; great camaraderie between senior and junior personnel."

"I am really happy to have won this competition and glad to be able to share the prize with others on board, including visitors to the Historic Dockyard."

● AB 'Gaz' Adam Harbon looks rather happy about winning a day with the Premier League Trophy

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex 'Knotty' Knott

My goodness, it's the Goodings

FATHER and son Richard and Dave Gooding had their first foreign run ashore together when ships of the Taurus 09 deployment arrived in Malta.

Perhaps the question was who was looking after whom... but they certainly enjoyed the opportunity.

WO Richard Gooding, who has clocked up 30 years of service, is on his final deployment as the Weapon Sensor Engineer in HMS Somerset.

His son, Lt Dave Gooding, is an Officer of the Watch and Damage Control Officer in HMS Bulwark.

Although they are both serving in Devonport-based ships, Taurus has been their first chance to serve together.

"The opportunity to have this reunion and work together in my final year in the Navy is something we will remember fondly for years to come," said WO Gooding, from Plymouth, Devon.



● WO Richard Gooding and Lt Dave Gooding

Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow

PETTY Officer Marcus 'Wiggy' Wigfull is the most popular aircrewman ever in Search and Rescue – he has been called out on a record-breaking 600 missions.

Wiggy (pictured right), who is currently stationed at HMS Gannet, has notched up his record-breaking number in 11 years based at Gannet and Culdrose.

Originally from Unstone, near Sheffield, the former pupil of Henry Fanshawe School in Dronfield is modest about his significant milestone, saying: "For me it's about personal pride more than anything else."

"It's a varied job and that's one of the great things about it. No two rescues are the same and that's what keeps me coming back for more every time."

The unit's commanding officer, Lt Cdr Bryan Nicholas, is more upfront about Wiggy's achievement.

"It really is something special," he said. "Even before reaching the 600 mark, he had more search and rescue call-outs than anyone else – his experience of flying missions is



unparalleled in the Royal Navy."

He added: "Flying is in his blood and he deserves many congratulations on his milestone."

"We're all proud to be associated with him."

During his 11 years' service, one of Wiggy's most high-profile missions came with the sinking of the oil tanker MV Erika off the coast of Brittany in 1999, when he

was based in Culdrose.

"The weather was terrible and the Bay of Biscay can be a notoriously hostile place," he remembers. "But there is a certain excitement attached to rescues like that – and an important learning curve, too."

Wiggy now lives in Ayrshire with his wife, Emma and children Lucas and Maisie.

RN seeks Excellent relatives

TWO new accommodation buildings at HMS Excellent, Whale Island, Portsmouth, are to be named after Royal Navy heroes, and the search is on to find their living relatives to attend the opening ceremony.

Chief Gunner Israel Harding was awarded the VC for his part in the action on board HMS Alexandra during the naval attack on Alexandria, Egypt, in 1882.

Harding picked up a 10-inch live shell that landed with the fuse still burning on the deck, close to the hatchway to the magazine containing 25 tons of gunpowder.

As he later told a newspaper reporter: "I just picked up that shell and flung it into a tub of water."

"It was heavy hot and grimy. It is dreadful to think what would have happened had the shell exploded..."

Harding was born (appropriately) on Trafalgar Day 1833 in Portsmouth and enlisted in the Navy as a cabin boy serving alongside his father in HMS Echo.

He married Emma Annette Nunn and is buried with his wife and mother-in-law in Highland Road cemetery, Portsmouth. He died in 1917, aged 83.

He bequeathed his medals to his four children, Joseph, Louisa, Annette and Castora.

One of Harding's daughters is known to have lived in Billingshurst, Sussex.

Sgt Norman Finch, VC, originally hailed from Handsworth, Birmingham, the son of John and Emma Finch, from Southport.

He joined the Navy in 1908 and trained at Eastney Barracks in Portsmouth.

Finch was presented with his

VC by King George V in 1918 for his immense bravery on HMS Vindictive, manning the pomps and Lewis guns under extreme gunfire and shelling.

He married Elizabeth Jane Ross on April 3 1919 in Birmingham.

Finch also served in the Portsmouth Division RM Depot before being promoted temporary Lieutenant (QM) as a store-keeping officer until his release from service in August 1945.

He died in Portsmouth in 1966, having bequeathed his medals to the Royal Marines Museum.

The opening ceremony for the new accommodation blocks, which will provide a further 134 cabins, conferencing and bar facilities and provision for disabled visitors, will take place on May 13 2009.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of descendants of the two men is requested to contact Heather Tuppen, Press Officer at Portsmouth Naval Base, on 023 9272 3737.

FIVE PAIRS OF TICKETS TO BE WON!!!

RNAS Yeovilton will be celebrating 100 years of Naval Aviation at their annual Air Day. An extensive flying and static display will take place to mark this significant milestone with a mass flypast of naval aircraft, rare historic warbirds and classic jets. There will be no less than four world class military display teams present comprising of the Royal Jordanian Falcons, the Italian Air Force Freccie Tricolori, the Spanish Air Force Patrulla Aguila and the RAF Red Arrows.

Enter our competition and you could be one of five lucky winners of a pair of adult tickets to this internationally famous event.

Simply answer the question below, complete the entry form and post to: Yeovilton Air Day Competition, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, Hants. PO1 3HH or email your answer and details to: marketing@navynews.co.uk

Closing date: 8th June 2009

Question: How many world class military display teams will be present ?

Answer

Name

Address

Post Code

Phone

Email

Entries must reach the Navy News office by 12 noon 8th June 2009. Five entries will be drawn at 15.00. Each lucky winner will be notified by email, phone or post and will receive a pair of adult tickets by post direct from the Air Day office. The decision of the judges is final and there is no alternative prize. Employees of Navy News are not permitted to enter the competition.

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Carrier'ed away

WHEN Cdre Martin Westwood stepped down from command of the Defence Flying Helicopter School at RAF Shawbury, his departure took a slightly unusual form.

The squadrons saluted their outgoing leader borne along in his own personal 'aircraft carrier' (pictured above).

Navy, Army and RAF students are all initially trained together at the RAF base in North Shropshire, with each of the three forces weeks later diverging into specialist training within squadrons under their own banner.

The Naval officer has now handed over the Commandant title of the Defence Helicopter Flying School to Group Capt Jock Brown of the RAF.

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Echo'logy

SURVEY ship HMS Echo showed off her ecological credentials when she visited Jakarta in Indonesia.

Thirty members of the ship's company travelled to the Pondok Pesantren Asshiddiqiyah Islamic College to help students plant trees around the school (pictured above).

Echo's commanding officer, Cdr Gary Brooks, said: "A mutual friendship definitely developed among the children, their teachers and the sailors."

"All from HMS Echo experienced the mutual benefit of the Royal Navy mixing with the Indonesian community."

The next day saw the hydrographic and oceanographic survey ship welcome on board a party of pupils and teachers from the school.

Kent builds 'Lynx' with Demelza House

MEMBERS of HMS Kent's ship's company paid a call on their affiliated charity Demelza House, accompanied rather impressively by two Lynx helicopters from 815 Naval Air Squadron, courtesy of the ship's Flight Observer Lt Henderson.

Demelza's director of fundraising James Hanaway said: "The children were really excited to see the Lynx helicopters and a great day was had by all."

"It was fantastic to welcome the crew of HMS Kent to Demelza and

gave us the opportunity to show them where all their fundraising efforts are put to work."

Lt Cdr Peter Pipkin WEO said: "The purpose of the visit was to reaffirm our links with the children's hospice in Sittingbourne, Kent, and hand over a cheque for £2,500 – money raised during our deployment to the Far East last year."

Demelza House is a haven for many families with terminally ill children, creating a real home from home atmosphere.



● A selection of the John O'Groats to Land's End cyclists from ComUKAmphibFor: Capt John Hayward, Capt Rob Thorpe, Maj Mike Scanlon, Lt Cdr Si Gair, Lt Cdr Dan Thomas, WO1 Steve Collins RN

By sea, by land, by bike in Basra

BASRA is not well known for its cycling paths, so the 12 members of Commander UK Amphibious Forces have been improvising a bit in the gym.

The 12 men, both Navy and Marines, are all in training for an End-to-End cycle challenge due to take place at the start of June.

They will cycle over ten days from John O'Groats to Land's End, stopping at RN and RM units along the way, all to raise funds for Help for Heroes.

Capt John Hayward RM said: "Currently every member of the team is stationed in Basra. A total lack of bikes (and hills) has forced us to train using Trixter Spinning Cycles in the gym here, while

using the expertise of a few cycling 'gurus' and attractive spinning instructors."

The team have already begun their fundraising efforts, already £1,600 towards their ultimate goal of £30,000.

John added: "The website is www.justgiving.com/jogle_by_caf, and we are open to all sorts of offers and ideas in order to boost our totals."

The 12 cyclists are: Col Pete Taylor, John Stainton, Lt Col Sharky Ward, Maj Mike Scanlon, Maj Yorkie Maynard, Maj Chris Hall, Lt Cdr Simon Gair, Lt Cdr Dan Thomas, Capt John Hayward, Capt Rob Thorpe, WO1 Steven Collins.



...and by foot

THE amphibious lads are not the only ones who've been facing a challenge to train in Basra. Lt Claire Poynton found out shortly after arriving in Iraq that her application to run the London marathon this April was successful.

Six months in Basra with all the limits of the environment and the weather were not entirely conducive to training, so the officer rose early to get her miles in before the full heat of the day, and spent long hours on the treadmill.

She arrived back in the UK with just two months of training to prepare for this month's marathon, and is loving every minute of training in the cold and wet of the

British spring – "It's lovely. I can listen to music. Run on my own. It's not dusty. It's not roasting hot."

Claire is running the marathon – her first full marathon after two successful Plymouth half-marathons – in aid of Cancer Research UK; her father was diagnosed with the disease two years ago.

She admits she didn't entirely expect to get her application approved: "It was a bit of a shot in the dark. My mum told me I've got to go for it, when I started thinking about it, and so I did."

Spare a thought for Claire's post-marathon recovery – she joins her new ship HMS Roebuck the day after.

If you would like to sponsor her, she has a webpage at www.justgiving.com/clairepoynton. (Oh, and by the way, if the CAF guys would like to sponsor her on there as she did for them a long while back, that would be good...)

Heart of Oak help Acorns

STUDENTS from the Defence School of Health Care Studies at Selly Oak in Birmingham jumped at the chance to run an activities afternoon with a military twist at the Acorn's Children's Hospice.

LMA Lizzie Meaty said: "We provided an array of uniforms and military kit, kindly donated gifts from local careers offices, and nautical word searches and crafts to give an insight into the Forces."

"The children and their carers were delighted to take part in the activities afternoon, leaving with happy memories and a glimpse of the military way of life."

Students regularly volunteer at the Hospice which supports children and their families in the West Midlands. They help maintain the grounds, and offer services as play workers, and adding to the experiences, entertainment and happy memories of children with limited lifespans.

"After the great time we had," said Lizzie, "we're planning a larger event for patients, families and carers in the summer."

Sultan helps KIDS

THE PROCEEDS of last year's fundraising efforts on the Keswick to Barrow 40-mile road race by HMS Sultan staff have been presented to charities Naomi House Children's Hospice and KIDS – Fareham and Gosport Young Carers.

The two teams – the Delayed Neutrons and the Fast Neutrons – netted between them the Keswick/Barrow Challenge Cup for the best walking by a team from outside Cumbria and the W Richardson Trophy for the best team from the MOD and Armed Forces.

The donations were particularly well received this year as the credit crunch and international financial problems have created difficulties particularly for Naomi House Children's Hospice.



● CPO Richard Perfect in Afghanistan

Deep perfects training in Helmand

IT'S not just Iraq (see left) which has provided challenge for training programmes, out on the frontline in Afghanistan CPO Richard Perfect has been getting himself ready for this month's London Marathon.

The submariner, rather more used to being in an under-the-sea environment than in a total absence of sea, has always dreamt of running the London Marathon and when he found that he had a place was not prepared to let the chance slip away.

The 37-year-old said: "It was always my ambition to run the distance before I hit 40, and so training in Afghanistan, whatever the difficulties, was my only option."

The camp at Lashkar Gah did add to the difficulties of training for an endurance event – its perimeter is just under 1km with a surface of loose stone and gravel.

Ritchie said: "Running round in circles, on less than even ground, is challenging (not to mention mind-numbingly boring) and does play havoc on my ankles. I have had more than a few near misses."

"My role here in the Brigade headquarters is to assist with the care pathway for all injured servicemen – from those involved in minor accidents to those seriously injured in battle."

"Having seen the nature and extent of the injuries sustained by individuals in this theatre, I decided to join the Help for Heroes Marathon team."

He added: "I fully support the work they do in helping both the individual and families, both through the initial stages of trauma and in long-term rehabilitative care."

"I am fully aware of the number and extent of life-changing injuries sustained in Helmand, and by running the marathon not only can I fulfil a lifetime ambition, but I can also do a small bit to help raise funds for this worthy cause."

And so as the heat rises in Helmand, Ritchie Perfect can be found patiently (and cautiously) wending his way around the base's perimeter as he prepares for the somewhat different environment of the London Marathon.

Support his efforts online at www.justgiving.com/ritchieperfect.

■ IN THE RATHER less gruelling conditions of the Devonshire countryside, former Weapon Engineering Artificer Marcus Page is also preparing himself for the London Marathon.

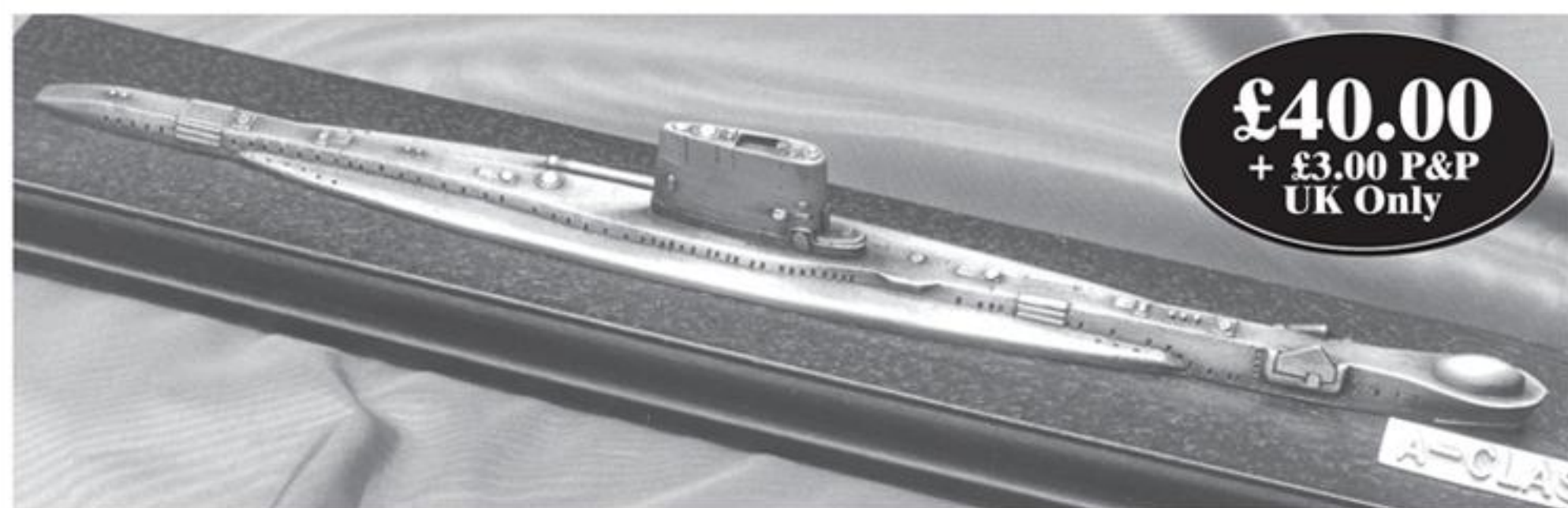
The one-time submariner who spent five years in the Royal Navy before being discharged due to deep vein thrombosis is determined to raise £1,400 for charity, the Sailors' Society.

Find out more and pledge your support at www.justgiving.com/marcuspage.

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Navy shapes up for H4H

THE NAVY took on the Army and the RAF to race from Calais to London – without ever leaving Belgium, raising 2,325 Euros (£2,080) for Help for Heroes.

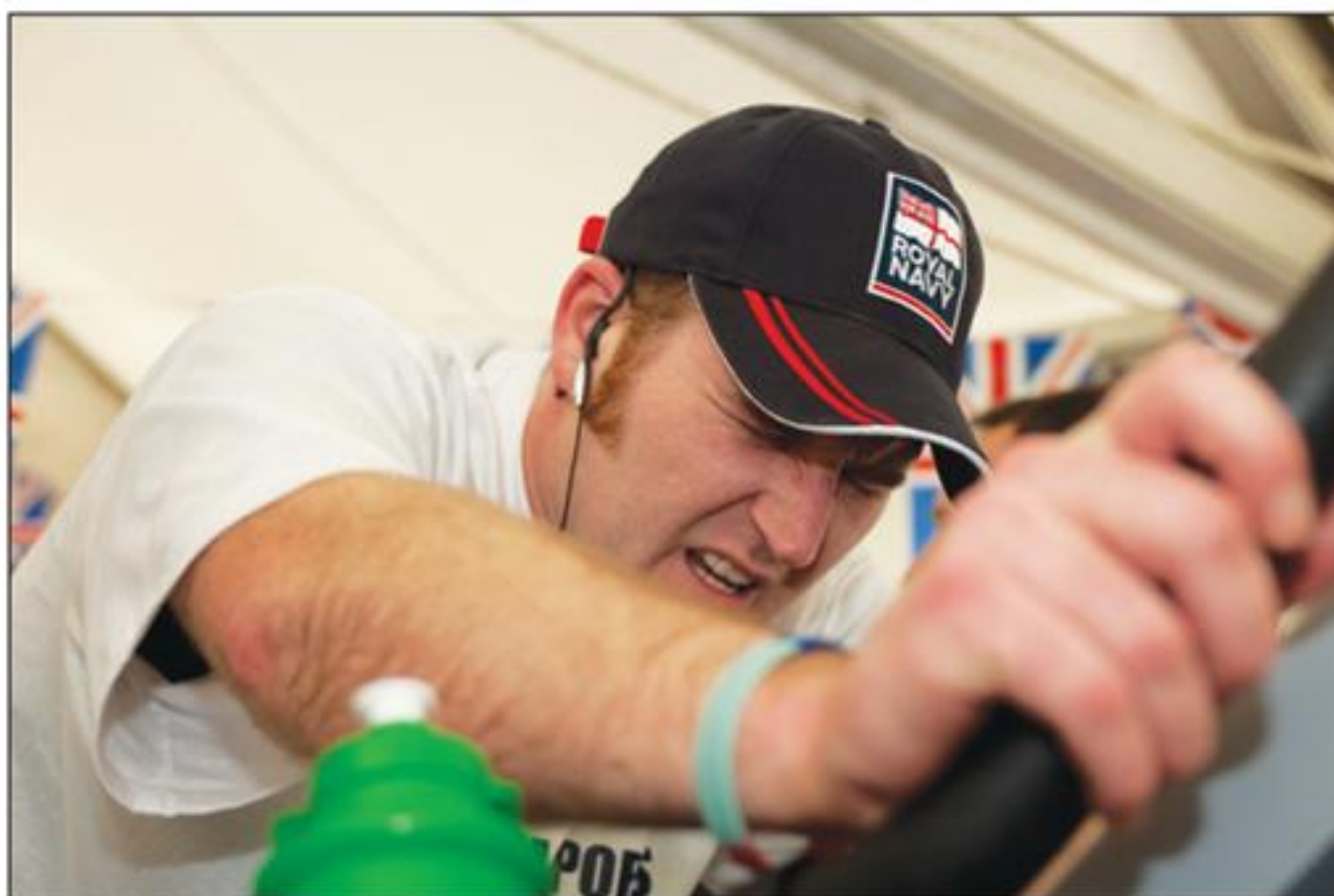
A team of ten Naval personnel at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) of NATO beat off their military counterparts in a virtual race – a 3.5km row, an 8.5km bike ride, and a 4.2km run by each one of the team members.

Throughout their efforts they were supported as they rowed on rowing machines the 35km (19 miles) from Calais to Dover, cycled on exercise bikes the 85km (53 miles) from Dover to Rochester, then ran on treadmills the 42km (26 miles) from Rochester to the Ministry of Defence in London.

Team captain POLogs (Pers) Adam Wheldon said: "It was an outstanding effort by all our team, we're really pleased to have raised so much money for such a brilliant cause – not only did we beat the Army and the RAF but we also raised most money!"

It was a narrow margin of victory, but the Naval team managed to pull ahead of their closest rivals by 500m.

The achievement of this victory was perhaps somewhat sweetened by the last place for the Army, whose captain told BFBS Radio that he doubted the Navy's ability



● POLogs Adam Wheldon puts heart and soul into the cycling leg of the tri-Service H4H challenge at SHAPE

Picture: Sebastian Kelm

to survive even the rowing leg, let alone complete the whole race...

The team were: POLogs Adam Wheldon, Cdr Simon Morris, Cdr Chris Godwin, Lt Cdr Jonathan Wood, Lt Paul Everard, CPOlogs Jan Lambert, POCIS Gaz Betts, LLogs Dave Price, LLogs Jenni Wheldon, former RM Trevor Ford, POCIS Ian Threlfall (adjudicator), and Lt Cdr Nigel Martin, who trained for the event but had to withdraw with an injury on the day of the race.

■ TWELVE students from the College of West Anglia have also

been putting their efforts into fundraising for Help for Heroes.

The 12, who are all aspiring Service men and women studying on the Pre-Uniformed and Public Services Course, raised £1,403 climbing the three highest peaks in the Yorkshire Dales, under the watchful eye of their tutors – former Navy man Andy Henderson and former Marine Lee Mallott.

Lee said: "This was a tough challenge, completed in poor conditions, but it is an outstanding achievement and I am very proud of them."

Seven Severns

THREE officers from fishery patrol ship HMS Severn cycled from Penzance to Portsmouth, notching up six of the Severn-class lifeboat stations on their route.

The 350-mile cycle along the south coast by Lt Simon Yates, Lt Rowland Wilson and S/Lt Charles Thornton netted £1,500 for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

Their arrival in Portsmouth at the last of the seven Severns was heralded with a heroes' welcome as members of the ship's company cheered the weary cyclists home.

The RNLI's Andrew Whyte was also there to greet them at journey's end. He said: "This is a fantastic achievement."

"The fact that the ship's company of HMS Severn decided to support the campaign and visit six of the Severn-class RNLI stations shows the continuing support from the RN for the RNLI."

The ship's commanding officer Lt Cdr Steve Moorhouse added:



● Lt Simon Yates, Lt Rowland Wilson and S/Lt Charles Thornton arrive back at Portsmouth Naval Base after a 350-mile cycle ride

Picture: LA(Phot) Matt Ellison

This is an outstanding effort for an extremely worthwhile cause – 350 miles in five days demonstrates the fitness of our sailors and their desire to contribute to a cause

close to any sailor's heart."

RNLI stations visited along the way were: Penzance, Pendeen, Falmouth, Torbay, Weymouth and Yarmouth.

Red rose raced by rowers

WHEN Type 23 HMS Lancaster bade farewell to her stint of operations in the Gulf, her ship's company decided to make that final transit of the Suez Canal just a little more difficult.

The length of the Suez is 87.5 miles (140,817m), so the ship needed 141 volunteers to each row 1,000m within the tight timescale.

LPT Daz Hoare said: "Both the ship's rowing machines were used in tandem as the ship was falling into action stations later that day so the team had to row hard and fast."

"Personnel were coming up from all spaces wearing overalls, combats and sports gear... and Spiderman (right)."

"The ship passed through the Suez in 10 hours 53 mins, and the ship's personnel completed the trip in 8 hours 53 minutes."

"A great achievement by the Red Rose in which £250 was raised for the ship's charity A Breath For Life."



Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Weatherston



● The Centurion runners set out from Dauntless in Glasgow to run to their affiliated city Newcastle

Dented but undaunted

A CENTURION'S armour is not designed for the long distance runner, but the men of new destroyer HMS Dauntless weren't going to be put off by a few dents in their uniforms...

The 'part-time' Centurions – the ship's badge shows the profile of a Roman centurion rising from the waves – raised £1,660 for children on Ward 26 at the Newcastle General Hospital along their 150-mile relay run from the ship's current home at the BVT yard in Glasgow to the ship's affiliated city Newcastle.

The staff on Ward 26 provide medical and surgical care for children and young people with major neurological trauma, and specialises in the treatment of children with head injuries and immune system problems.

WO Shaun Day, president of the Senior Rates' Mess that adopted Ward 26 as its charity, said: "We were very pleased when we were asked to support the children's ward – all the staff do an incredible job day in, day out, so it is an extremely worthwhile cause."

CPO Mark Stokes added: "Obviously we were looking forward to the run, but it did seem odd that we covered 150 miles starting at sea level and finishing

at sea level, yet most of the run was uphill!"

Dauntless has taken up the affiliation with Newcastle which came free after the city's namesake ship ended her Naval career.

Helga Charters, matron for Children's Services at the hospital, said: "We are thrilled to have had such a wonderful affiliation with the Naval crew of HMS Newcastle and look forward to building on our relationship with them when the brand new HMS Dauntless has been fully commissioned."

"The Navy has been really supportive to us over the years, and the children love meeting them when they take time out to visit us in hospital."

"We are really excited about welcoming the new ship when she comes up the Tyne next year."

In addition to the runners, a team of 30 sailors led by Dauntless' Senior Naval Officer Cdr Giulian Hill headed over to Newcastle for a two-day visit to help with various community projects in the local area.

The Centurion runners included: Cdr Ian Buckle, Lt Paddy Carbery, Lt Phil Sharkey, WO1 Shaun Day, CPO Mark Stokes, CPO Billie Hastie, CPO Richie Richardson, CPO Scotty Lovell, CPO Sully Sullivan, and PO Dave Brundle.



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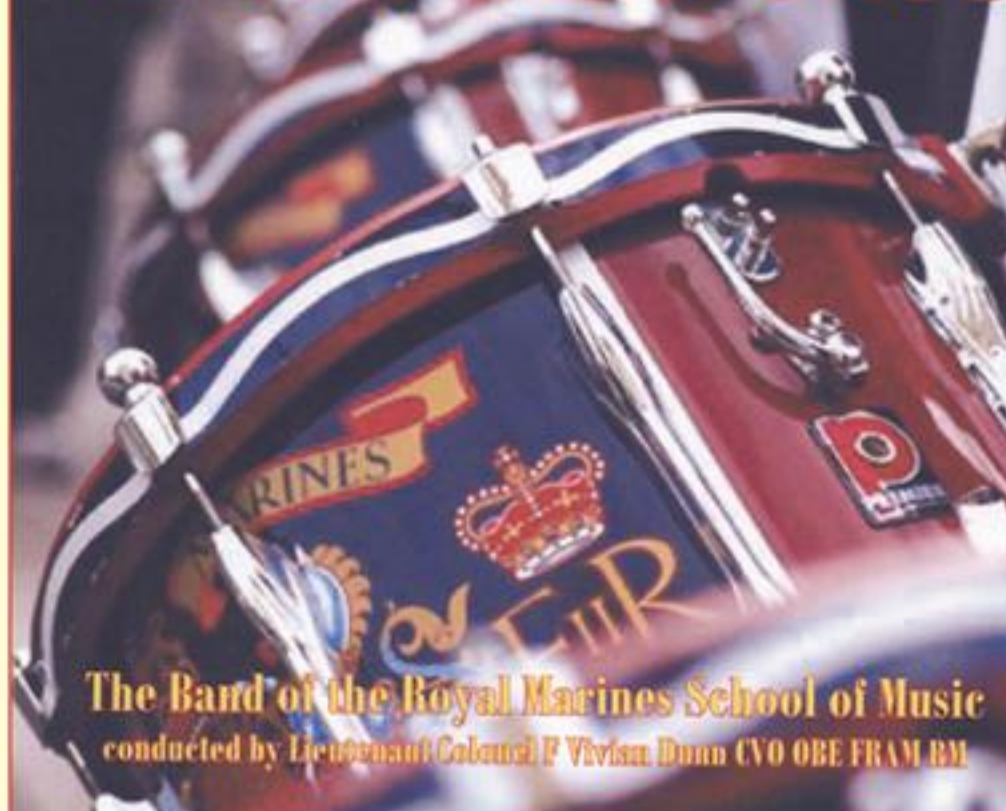
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Frozen



● Members of 6 Troop, the Royal Marines Signals Detachment demonstrating the use of snow shoes and poles at Clockwork in Bardufoss, Norway

ONCE AGAIN the ice and snow of Norway have lured the fliers of the Commando Helicopter Force north into the Arctic Circle to perfect their skills in mountain flying in extreme conditions against mercurial weather and sudden white-outs.

Clockwork now bears the epithet Joint Helicopter Command as the cold-weather flying experts of the CHF are called upon to spread their expertise among the other branches and Services.

This year's venture north to Bardufoss saw the Jungly Sea King 4s of Yeovilton joined by Search and Rescue Sea King 5s from RNAS Culdrose, RAF Chinooks from 27 Sqn and 7 Sqn, and Army Lynx from 657 Sqn.

It was Lt Cdr Steve Doubleday who was at the helm of this year's training which saw some 450 personnel from all three Services visit Bardufoss for some training in the CHF specialism.

Although the officer's experiences of Bardufoss were slightly more dramatic than expected when he was called in to the site of a crashed aircraft.

The Sea King Qualified Helicopter Instructor said: "We were about to conduct a snow-landing sortie around Bardufoss.

"We were just about to man the aircraft when we had a shout that a civilian had gone down. We were asked if we were prepared to look for it.

"We immediately had a crew huddle, assessed the options, and quickly confirmed that we would assist."

The Navy Sea King was the first aircraft to get airborne and start the search.

The Naval officer was asked by the Norwegian authorities if he would act as On Scene Commander for the search of the area, which by its end pulled in seven different aircraft seeking the lost helo.

He said: "It was really punk weather. Some of the most demanding weather I've flown in. There was low visibility, heavy snow, and we were searching above the tree-line with no visual references."

The track of the missing aircraft led the crew up a major valley and over a large frozen lake into an area which is not normally used by CHF, with the

entire landscape blanketed by heavy snow.

Lt Cdr Doubleday said: "Everything was simply white."

After much effort, the crew spotted a dark object on the valley floor, which once they got closer became clear was a small helicopter.

The Squirrel helicopter was badly damaged, with three of its rotor blades missing and its tail boom mangled, and scattered debris surrounding it.

Despite the risks of the extreme weather and the uneven ground, the decision was taken to land the Sea King and its accompanying Bell helicopter close to the downed aircraft.

The Bell helicopter had two medics and three policemen on board. Once they got close, they could see that the pilot had been killed in the crash, but there were a number of footprints around the crash site which indicated a possible survivor.

This information was swiftly passed on to the other aircraft searching in the area.

Reports came back to the Sea King crew that a man had been spotted running out of a log-cabin on the banks of the frozen lake - this turned out to be the missing passenger from the crashed helicopter.

As the storm flared into a white wall of horizontal snow, Lt Cdr Doubleday and his crew stayed with the wreckage, waiting for the police to complete their duties and the weather to clear before flying the body of the pilot back to the Norwegian base at Bardufoss.

He said: "My crew demonstrated their considerable ability and skill in a tremendously hazardous environment.

"I am extremely proud of them. My only regret is that we could not help the pilot."

Despite the gruelling sortie, the officer speaks highly of the Bardufoss experience amid the challenging Arctic conditions.

Lt Cdr Doubleday said: "In 20 years this was my best detachment ever. I loved it.

"It was the mixture of the environment, the challenging flying, the chance to have a beer with your workmates where you're not being mortared, and the opportunity to do a bit of skiing."



● An RAF Chinook conducts 'touch and go' landings

jungle



● A Commando Helicopter Force Jungly Sea King runs through landing drills on the thick snow of Norway

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins



"This publicity is long overdue..."

"THEY always joke at Culdrose: If it flies it must be RAF, because so often the air station is described as 'RAF Culdrose' in the media."

It's an anecdote, recounted by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, which captures the enduring wry humour of naval aviators, but it also demonstrates, says Britain's ranking sailor, the nation's "sea blindness".

Officially launching Fly Navy 100 – the RN's celebration of a century of aviation at sea – Admiral Band stressed that there was more to 2009 than a birthday bash for the Fleet Air Arm, however well-deserved.

Throughout the year, the RN will champion the heroic deeds of naval airmen past and present with a raft of shows, events, public displays and commemorations.

But after the party's over?

"One of our aims is to tell the public what naval aviation is all about, and tell young people that they can join the Navy to fly," the First Sea Lord explained at the launch at the Royal Aeronautical Society in London.

Current operations and future capabilities will be celebrated in the coming months as well as the Fleet Air Arm's long and illustrious history.

"It's particularly fitting that the first cutting of steel for HMS Queen Elizabeth will be taking place during the centenary year of naval aviation," said Admiral Band.

He added: "The requirement for the two new aircraft carriers is testimony to the enduring capability of carrier aviation."

"Each carrier offers the UK four acres of mobile sovereign base able to provide airpower worldwide for

all types of operation.

"This need for expeditionary capability is at the very core of what the Royal Navy is all about and the Fleet Air Arm is a key element."

The highlight of Fly Navy 100 will be on May 7, when more than 50 aircraft, including the Royal Navy Historic Flight, will fly in formation along the Thames and over HMS Illustrious, which will be moored at Greenwich.

The Duke of York – Commodore-in-Chief of the Fleet Air Arm – will land aboard the carrier in a Merlin and watch the flypast with serving and veteran aviators, including members of 820 NAS with whom he served in the Falklands in 1982.

The following day will see a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral to formally recognise and pay tribute to the sacrifices made during the history of the Royal Naval Air Service and the Fleet Air Arm.

An exhibition entitled '100 Years of Naval Flying' opens at the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton on July 7, and a Royal Garden Party celebrating the centenary will be held at Buckingham Palace on July 9.

Yeovilton Air Day is on July 11, and on July 24 there will be another flypast, this time over Eastchurch, on the Isle of Sheppey, the birthplace of naval aviation and home of the first Royal Naval Air Station.

Culdrose Air Day is on July 29 and the Channel Dash Association will dedicate a Swordfish Memorial to the Channel Dash heroes in Manston on August 29.



Then in October HMS Illustrious will visit Liverpool, where there will be another flypast (Friday October 23), and in November the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall will have the theme of 100 years of naval aviation.

The First Sea Lord explained: "This year is about reinforcing historical knowledge and future relevance, and anything which does that has to be good."

Fly Navy 100 has lined up many of the Fleet Air Arm's most celebrated aviators to help spread the word, including Lt Cdr James Newton, who was decorated during Operation Telic 2003, Maj Phil 'Ned' Kelly, the Royal Marine Harrier pilot, and two of its very senior 'big guns,' Capt Eric 'Winkle' Brown and John 'Jock' Moffat, who are both 90 this year.

Mr Moffat, the Swordfish pilot whose torpedo crippled the Bismarck in 1941, said: "I go round visiting schools and talking to ten, 11, and 12-year-olds. When I ask them what they know about the Fleet Air Arm, most of them have never heard of it."

"I tell them I used to fly and ask them what branch they think I was in, and they usually say it must have been the RAF."

He added: "It's very important that the public should know what the Fleet Air Arm did, and what it does today."

Capt Brown, the first man to land a twin-engined aircraft on a carrier, the first British pilot to fly a

helicopter, and one of the world's most famous test pilots, added: "The general public doesn't know enough about naval aviation and this publicity is long overdue."

"The Fleet Air Arm is the most challenging career a young man – or woman – could ask for."

"Anyone joining now would have a rewarding career, maybe not so dramatic as we had because the immensity of WW2 won't be repeated, but the job won't be any less romantic."

He continued: "There is still that element of romance about it, although there is now a greater element of change because the technology has been improved so much."

"The safety factor is much much better nowadays and there's been a marked difference in what you're allowed to do, but the challenge is still there."

Capt Brown, who flew to the USA a couple of months before his 90th birthday in January to fly the Joint Strike Fighter simulator, said: "The JSF is so sophisticated you won't have the diversity we had. In the future you will limit yourself to one aircraft but be a master of that particular aircraft."

"Young men must realise times have changed and they must adapt – they're not envious of the past, but they like some aspects of it."

He added: "I feel I was fortunate in being given a huge number of opportunities to spread my wings – literally. I enjoyed every minute and loved contributing to the Service."

"But then I love aeroplanes. I live near Gatwick and I can't sleep unless they're flying overhead. We've got to keep the momentum going and I won't let it flag – I'm on standby to give all the help I can to Fly Navy 100."



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You want to spend as little time landing and taking off as possible as these are the
you're most vulnerable

Afghan eye

Royal Naval officer S/Lt Alex Craig is a Commando Helicopter Force Sea King pilot currently deployed in Afghanistan, flying in support of British troops in Helmand province. In this article he takes a little time out from flying operations to explain a little about himself and his experiences working in Afghanistan. He was awarded his pilot's Wings in July last year, and then joined 846 NAS.



A 'Jungly' pilot's training is notoriously tough. Taught to operate as a single pilot alongside an aircrewman, it's known to be one of the most demanding courses in the Fleet Air Arm.

The pilot is responsible for flying the aircraft at low level (100ft), working the radios, acting as Air Mission Commander and, with help from an aircrewman, navigating safely to a given point.

Although they are trained to this high level, in Afghanistan it is much safer to operate with two pilots and an aircrewman.

One pilot, usually the aircraft captain, handles the mission command and radios so that the other pilot, usually the more junior 'P2' – second pilot – can concentrate solely on the safety of the aircraft.

When I arrived in theatre I asked one of the aircraft captains my responsibilities as a P2.

His reply, somewhat in jest was "Don't hit the ground unless I tell you to!"

It is a testament to the challenge of operating in such an environment.

The Sea Kings of 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons operate as part of the Joint Helicopter Force (Afghanistan) based at the Coalition-run Kandahar Airfield and have been since coming to theatre in November 2007.

From Kandahar they operate to Forward Operating Bases and smaller patrol bases supporting troops.

This support can range from re-supplies of ammunition and fuel, or food and water vital to their existence, or as we found in the run up to Christmas, lots and lots of mail.

A typical day of tasking in the winter involves starting at dawn, briefing before every flight to get any intelligence of enemy activity for the area in which the crew will be operating for that day.

They fly as a formation of two Sea Kings – for mutual support – but often find themselves operating with other British helicopters such as Apaches and Chinooks and also foreign ones like the Dutch Apache.

For each flight a crewman takes with him his SA80 rifle, 9mm pistol, survival bergen, webbing with spare ammunition and Mk61 survival jacket with body armour as well as personal survival kit in case the worst should happen.

This essential kit varies from person to person but will usually contain ammunition, water, survival aids, and during the winter, warm clothing.

I can see in the summer just how exhausted you could get just climbing in to the heat of the cockpit with so much kit.

Although the cold weather is a welcome break from the heat of the Afghan summer, operating the aircraft in freezing temperatures poses obvious problems for the engineers.

Much of the time they find themselves outside working on the aircraft in below-zero temperatures, at night or in heavy thunderstorms to provide serviceable aircraft for the following day's tasking.

Depending on that tasking we can find ourselves moving troops and supplies between various coalition troop outposts, as well as insertions of troops for deliberate assaults on known Taliban strongholds.

A typical day's tasking will involve spending six hours airborne with a further two spent sat in the cockpit.

I'm glad that the temperature is a gentlemanly 15°C degrees rather than the 45°C which it can frequently reach in the height of summer.

Once airborne, the flying varies from long transits at altitude across the relative safety of the Red Desert in the south of Helmand Province to minutes of excitement as the Sea King rapidly descends to fly fast and low to land at a patrol base.

The landing sites all vary in size, some of them no bigger than a tennis court, meaning that landing as a pair of Sea Kings leaves little room for error.

Flying in such confined areas means we have to concentrate on flying accurately, working closely with all members of the crew to ensure everything happens smoothly and safely.

You want to spend as little time landing and taking off as possible as these are the stages of flight during which you're most vulnerable to enemy fire.

You find yourself relying on your training....and the training of your mate landing just behind you!

Flying in colder weather has its benefits. The engines and rotor blades are much more efficient, meaning we can carry more people and stores.

The aircraft is usually filled with as much as it can carry which means each take-off is pushing the Sea King to its limits.

Although there are typical tasking days, there is no guessing where we will be tasked from one day to the next.

Afghanistan's vast landscape means that we could find ourselves working with British forces in the predominantly arid Helmand province one day, then working to the north in the snow-capped mountains with the Dutch forces in Urzgan province.

During the latter half of our three-month tour, the inclement weather of the Afghanistan winter was beginning to take hold, becoming more and more a factor during flying.

We have experienced colossal thunderstorms at night with torrential rain. No matter how bad the weather is for flying you've got to remember there are guys on the ground in much worse conditions, and it is our job to provide them with whatever we can.

It is for this attitude that the 'Junglies' are revered: getting the job done regardless of the conditions to support the troops.

After a few days of rain, the usually bone-dry wadis quickly fill up with the water running down from the hills.

The 'green-zones' surrounding the rivers were practically desert when we began our tour in December, but once it had rained they started to live up to their name.

It was amazing to see that after just a few days of rain the ground turned a rich green colour with the growth of farmers' crops – a livelihood which many Afghans rely on for their income.

Flying in Afghanistan is clearly very challenging and although we were well trained before we arrived in theatre, one thing we found it difficult to prepare for was the sheer pace of operations.

Flying more than I ever have before, spending the whole day completely focused took time to get used to.

I spent the first week pretty exhausted but soon fell in to the routine and really started to enjoy the flying.

the stages of flight during which
to enemy fire

● HMS Clyde as seen from San Carlos cemetery



STOOPING sharply as we make our way up a steep road, we cling tightly to our caps (his a smart dark blue beret, mine a not-so-smart RN beanie).

The road to Stanley is closed to prevent vehicles toppling over. The White Ensign billows furiously from the flagstaff. The gangway whistles as the austral wind buffets it.

The crest of the waves scurrying – there's no other word for it – across East Cove, a natural harbour for which the description 'bleak' seems woefully inadequate, are white.

"This is not windy," Lt Phil Burgess, HMS Clyde's marine engineer officer hollers.

What?

"This. This is not windy."

No?

"No. The week before Christmas gusts of 80kts were recorded – we were alongside and the ship was bouncing up and down..."

I can believe it.

For ten years I've written about the Falklands, studied the history books, peered at the photographs, but never actually been there – the only one of the *Navy News* team not to have the 'South Atlantic experience'.

What's it like?

Wet Wales. No trees. A bit like the Orkneys. Windy.

Unremittingly windy, I might add.

And for me, like most RN visitors to the South Atlantic, a few days of such weather is probably enough.

For the 40 men and women aboard HMS Clyde, there's no such escape. Indeed, most of the time they're out in it.

Finding her alongside at East Cove is the exception, not the rule. Three out of every four days, the patrol ship is on, er, patrol, somewhere around the Falklands, occasionally beyond – the canals of Patagonia, the fjords of South Georgia.

"If you ask a sailor, they probably enjoy the 'Clyde experience'," her CO Lt Cdr Graham Lovatt says emphatically.

"We have the best military accommodation on the island." (Having stayed on camp, I agree.) "We have the best food by far." (Having eaten on camp, I agree.)

Indeed, outside the RFA, the Rivers have probably the best 'creature comforts' in the Fleet – spacious en-suite cabins, TVs with access to four channels at sea or in port, plus email and internet access, as well as the 30 minutes' phone calls home each week.

Which all sounds rather nice. There's a catch. It's called work.

"People think the Rivers are a cushy number – the accommodation is good, the food is better, the camaraderie is even better, but you work a hell of a lot harder as well," says AB Mark Cross.

Clyde is a souped-up River-class. She's got bigger guns than her sisters, air radar, a flight deck (rather than a winching area) – and carries five extra crew as a result.

Souped up or not, she still doesn't have many sailors: a ship's company of just 40 (the sailors spend six months in Clyde as part of the rotation of the Fishery Protection Squadron's pool of matelots) means that the men and women are double, triple, even quadruple-hatted when it comes to duties on board. Every one of them is needed when the patrol ship's replenishing from tanker Black Rover, for example.

Most of Clyde's sailors are 'small shippers' – they've spent their careers in fishery protection or mine warfare.

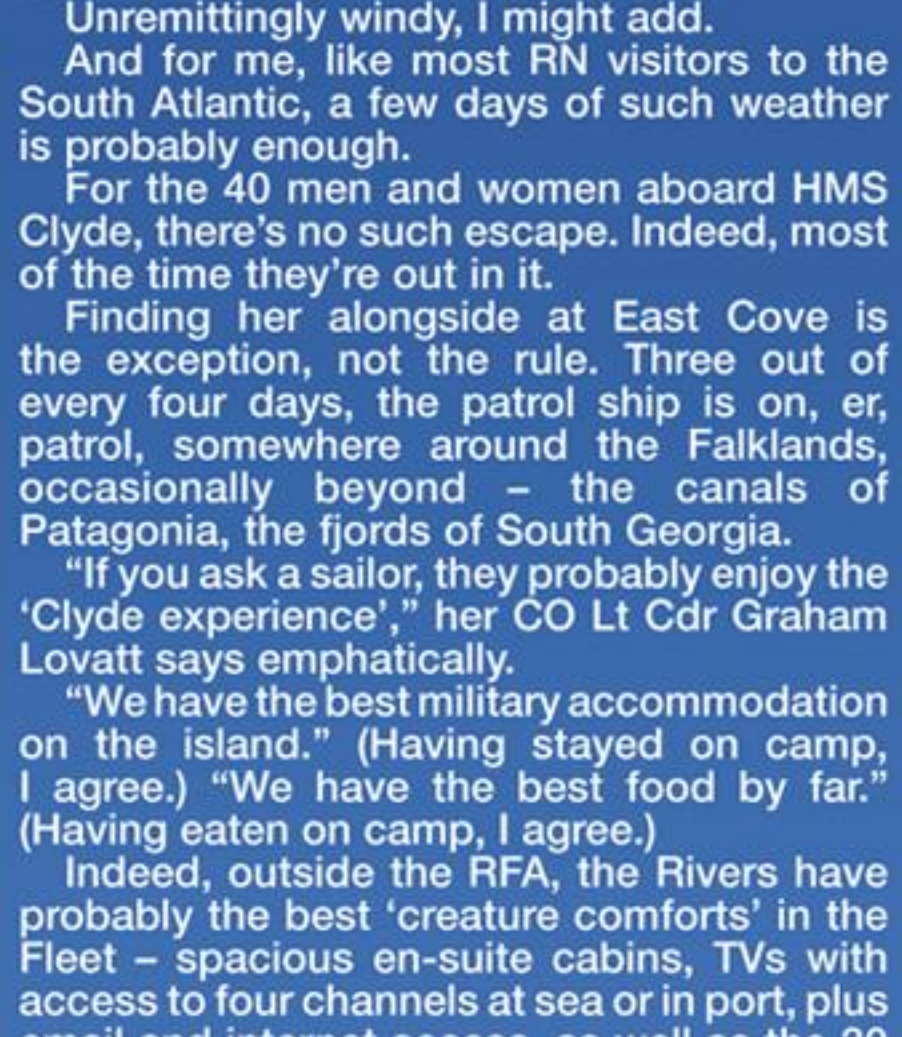
But not PO(AH) Scott Harding, the flight deck officer. Big ships have loomed large in his career (Invincible, Illustrious and, shortly, Ocean).

"It's an eye-opener," he admits. "Clyde's *raison d'être* is not aviation – we're a patrol ship with a flight deck."

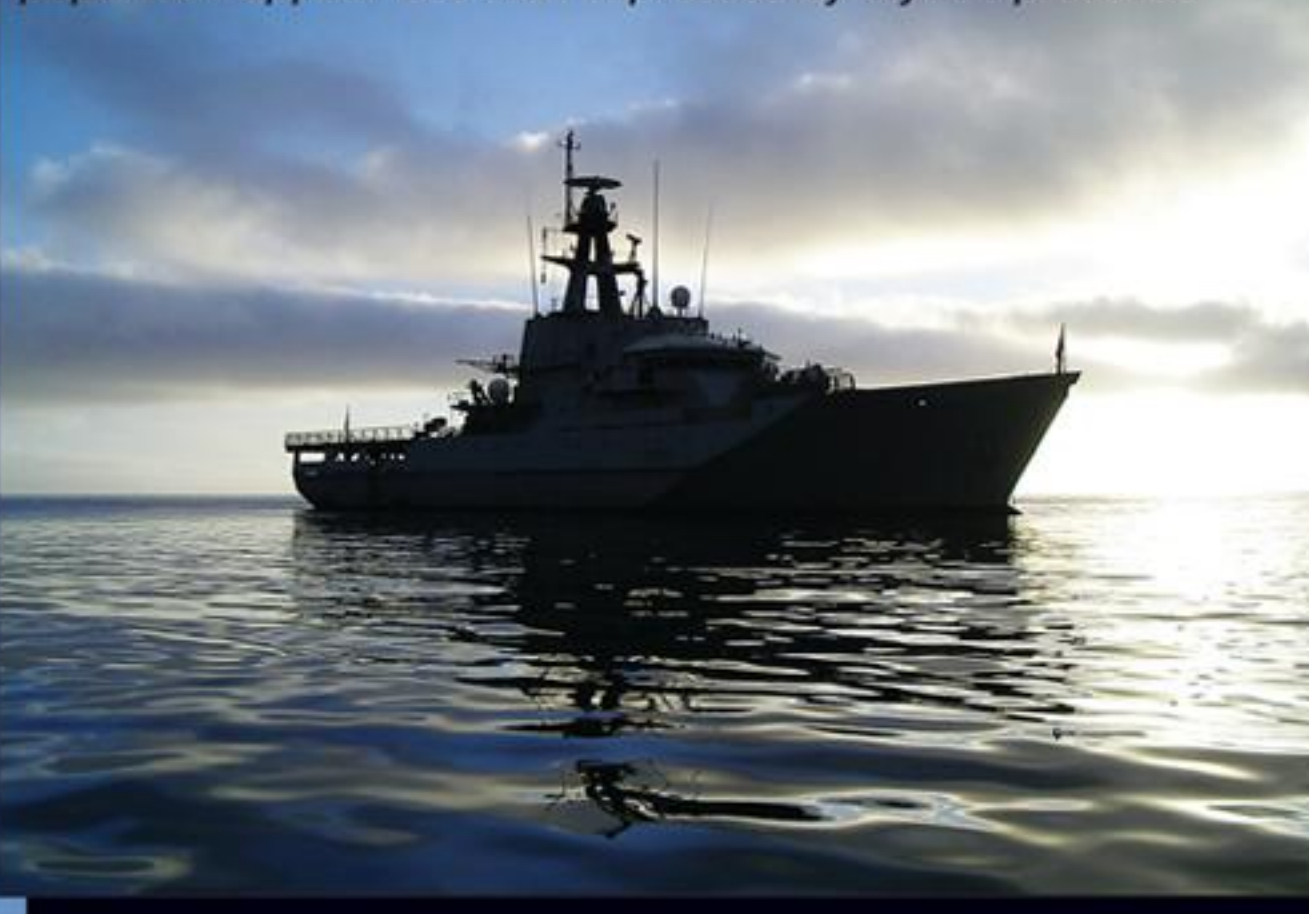
"You're drawn into the small ship team, how everyone aboard has multiple roles – I'm also swimmer of the watch, for example. You work as a team on a carrier flight deck, but on Clyde the teamwork aspect is really, really driven home."



● (This and main picture) Clyde makes her way through the stunning canals of Patagonia



● At Hill Cove anchorage and (above) South Georgia's penguin population appear less than impressed by Clyde's presence



The islands



IN THE final of two reports on life and operations in the Falklands in 2009, **Richard Hargreaves** looks at the work of the islands' two naval stalwarts, HMS Clyde and RFA Black Rover



Teamwork isn't just limited to the confines of the ship herself.

"We regularly exercise with the local infantry company – with a lot of success. They seem to have a brilliant time on board," says Lt Cdr Lovatt.

"In fact, you work with the Army and RAF on a weekly basis on a scale which you would not in the UK."

THE RN is very much in the minority on the islands; of the 1,000 or so British personnel concentrated 'on camp' – Mount Pleasant – two thirds are RAF, there are 300 or so soldiers, with around 50 matelots either in the complex, or ten minutes' drive away at East Cove Military Port (often referred to as Mare Harbour... but Mare Harbour is actually the next inlet along).

And the smallest presence of the smallest Service on the islands can be found at the top of that steep road which runs down to Clyde's jetty, Naval Engineering Falkland Islands or NEFI.

Visiting destroyers, frigates and RFA, plus the tugs which support the British military effort in the Falklands make use of the dozen or so engineers, shipwrights and four sailors looking after the stores and (very long) supply chain.

The engineers also have the poignant duty of maintaining all the naval war memorials around the islands – easier said than done as they're almost all in far-flung, inaccessible locations.

Looking after HMS Clyde is the number-one priority – although the team is only responsible for her boats, not the ship herself (which is owned and maintained by her builders BVT).

"Because of where we are and the facilities we have, there is a challenge fixing things – we're 8,500 miles from home where there are parts and equipment on tap," explains WO1 Mark Badstevener.

"So we've got a 'can-do' attitude. If we can, we will make it work."

Like Clyde's ship's company, the engineers do six months at East Cove ("unlike the RAF part-timers," one waspishly observed – Crabs typically do four months at Mount Pleasant).

Ten years ago it was a task for 40 engineers. Today, there are just 11 sailors here.

It is one of the smallest – and most independent – outposts in the RN empire.

Independence from the UK means a few touches you won't necessarily find back in Blighty – White Ensign curtains for a start. And there's a pet cat (Nelson, naturally) looked after by the engineers.

"We're a close-knit unit," says WO Badstevener. "We have to get on. We do get on. We take time out for sport once a week, go off at weekends as a unit paint balling, horse riding."

In fact, speak to anyone serving down here, whichever Service, and they'll play up the lifestyle down here.

"It's far from dull – it's certainly more interesting than the other Rivers," says HMS Clyde's AB(Sea) Mandy Drake.

"We get out and about, get to work with the RAF a lot more, even go flying with the Search and Rescue helicopter."

Her shipmate PO Harding adds: "There is much more to the islands than Mount Pleasant and the Globe [a popular hostelry in Stanley...]. Get out and enjoy the islands."

WHICH a lot of people seem to be doing – 'eco tourists' mainly.

Tourism is big bucks in the Falklands. Ten million bucks (well, pounds actually) each year.

The waterfront in Stanley – where visitors (and locals) look out upon the names of previous guardians of the islands spelled by giant boulders: Endurance, Protector, Dumbarton Castle – is a mini Mecca for visiting cruise ships.

There's no Ye Olde Falklandse Tea Shoppe (yet). But there are plenty of gift shops where you can (and people do) pick up penguin-related souvenirs.

At the height of summer one, perhaps two, cruise ships a day squeeze through Stanley Narrows and berth at the port (larger liners must drop anchor in Port William and come ashore in small craft).

Every cruise ship generates at least £18 per passenger for the islands (and that's before they start spending; the Falklands charge a landing fee).

Fifty thousand such passengers set down in Stanley each year – and the figure is rising.

They are here to sample the islands' wildlife: its penguins, its crystal-clear waters, its starkly-beautiful landscape, the cormorants, the albatrosses, the petrels, the dolphins.

All of which, if they're lucky, they'll see.

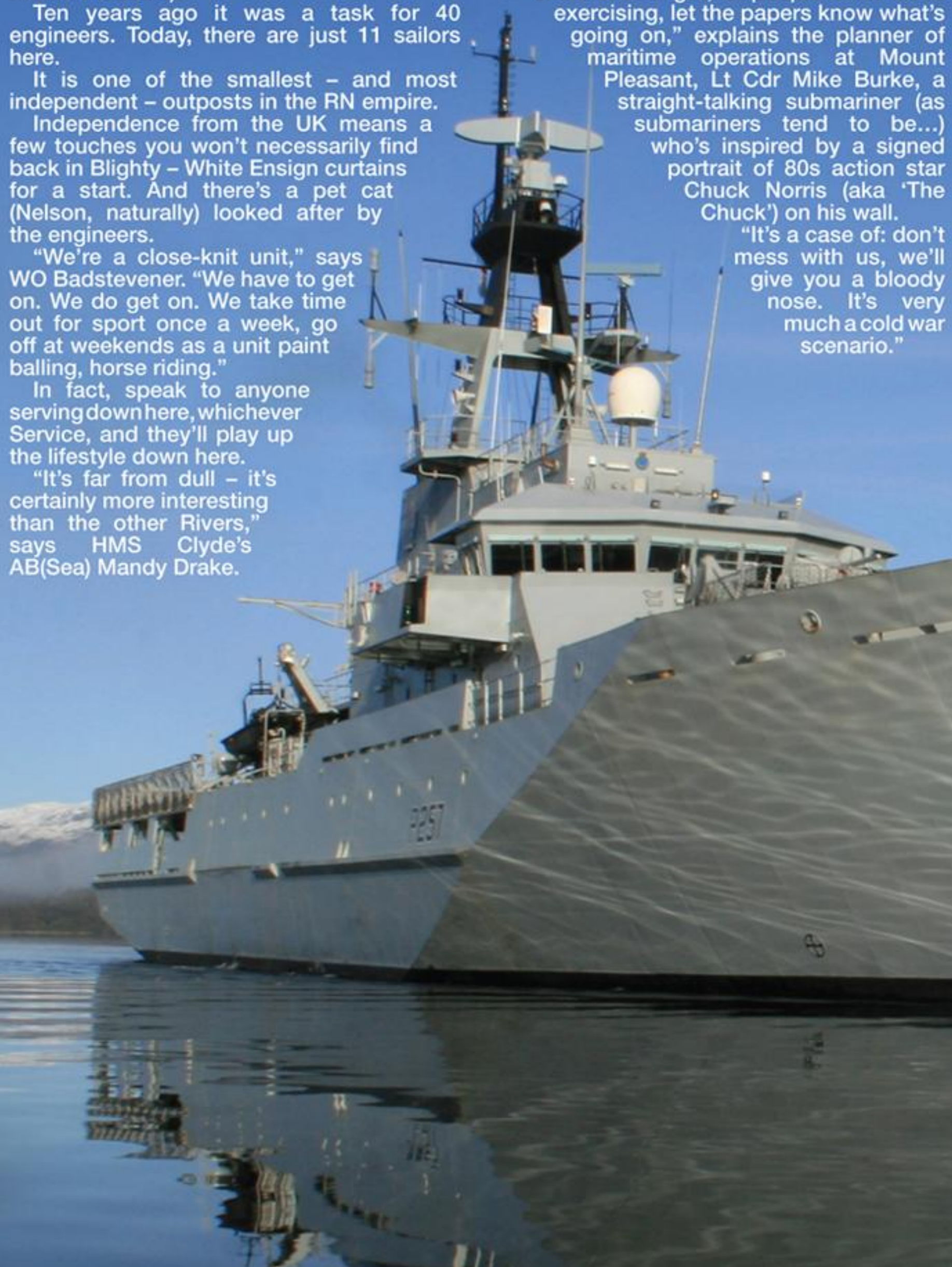
And they'll also see (and certainly hear...) two F3 Tornados passing low over Stanley Harbour – "the roar of freedom" some islanders call it.

It's all part of a subtle effort, a propaganda campaign for want of a better phrase ('info ops' is the correct official term), to demonstrate inwardly and outwardly that the British forces are here: to locals, to visitors, to tourists, to potential foes.

"We reassure the local populace, put on a show of strength, let people know we're exercising, let the papers know what's going on," explains the planner of maritime operations at Mount Pleasant, Lt Cdr Mike Burke, a straight-talking submariner (as submariners tend to be...)

who's inspired by a signed portrait of 80s action star Chuck Norris (aka 'The Chuck') on his wall.

"It's a case of: don't mess with us, we'll give you a bloody nose. It's very much a cold war scenario."



await you...

It's a little odd hearing the phrase 'cold war' nearly two decades after it seemingly passed into the realms of history (and you will hear it a lot on the Falklands).

And yet here are two immovable protagonists facing off day after day, week after week, month after month.

Las Malvinas are still burned into the psyche of every Argentine.

And Falkland Islanders are still resolutely British as the profusion of signs, banners and Union Flags reminds you.

"The islanders view themselves as British - that what strikes you most of all," says Clyde's CO Lt Cdr Lovatt.

"In their living memory, they have been invaded. We reassure them that we are here and that we're not going anywhere."

These days, Argentina is resolved to gaining dominion over the islands peaceably.

But that doesn't stop a bit of testing the water - maritime patrol aircraft skirting Falklands air space, a fishing vessel entering the islands' waters without permission. It's only fair guests receive a welcome. An F3. Or perhaps HMS Clyde.

"It's a bit weird really. It's not like dealing with the Russians - the intensity certainly isn't the same. But the Argentinians show that they want the islands," says Lt Cdr Burke.

Which is (a) why there remains a sizeable presence by Britain's Armed Forces here and (b) the Falklands is an operational theatre. It's not a backwater (nor, in fairness, is it by any means as intense as Afghanistan).

The Tornados are airborne pretty much every day - they escort the airbridge flights from the UK in and out of the islands.

And HMS Clyde is out and about 282 days of the year.

"Atlantic patrol ships come and go, but we are always here," says Lt Cdr Lovatt.

"Our patrols provide a presence - cruise liners see us, fishing vessels see us, Falklanders see us. We make ourselves visible, reassure islanders. We're a sign of enduring support."

UNLIKE her sisters in UK waters, Clyde cannot conduct boardings of fishing vessels - unless she has a local fishery protection officer aboard. She can (and does) keep tabs on them, and say 'hello' from time to time.

In fact, the fishery hunting grounds lie a considerable distance offshore (Clyde spends much of her time in coastal waters).

Like tourism, fishing is big business in the islands, not the act of trawling and selling hauls - the Falklands themselves are too small a market - but the act of selling licences to fish in the 160,000 (ish) square miles of territorial waters.

If I were to say 'Illex and Loligo' you might conjure up characters from Virgil or perhaps *Star Trek*. They're squid - and the main reason trawlers from all over the world (Spain, Korea, Japan, China and Taiwan) come here. Illex is popular in the Far East. The more expensive loligo fills plates in the Mediterranean... but not as many as they used to.

"Some nations have just stopped fishing for a few years because of the cost of fuel and price of fish dropping," explains Steve Waugh, fishery protection officer.

That said, the fish business still generates well over £10m for the islands every year.

That it does is thanks to a concerted effort by the fishery protection team in Stanley - their home is a portable building stacked on top of an aged and rather ramshackle barge which serves as the town's 'port'.

They work closely with an RAF Hercules which regularly conducts maritime patrols and reports the vessels it has encountered.

"Ten years ago we were being hit by 50 poachers every night," says Steve.

The islands armed its fishery patrol vessel, fired a few warning shots, even set one poacher's vessel alight. No poachers were hurt. And few returned to Falklands waters.

AND talking of returning to Falklands waters (dubious segue - Ed)...

After several weeks undergoing maintenance in South Africa, RFA Black Rover made her way back across the South Atlantic to resume her tanker/patrol duties around the Falklands... but not before she called in on Tristan da Cunha, the world's most remote island community.

The ship arrived off the sparsely-inhabited island (pop. 296) during holiday season; locals decamp from the 'capital', Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, to the other side of Tristan for a break.

They returned to the 'city' to welcome the tanker sailors and take them on at football... once they cleared the cows off the pitch. The sailors lost heavily (one islander suggested they should change their name from 'Black Rover' to 'Losers'...)

"The pitch was on a gradient which made it difficult enough," said 2/O Julian Parkin. "But we also had to dodge the pats."

When not dodging cow pats on remote islands, it's his job to navigate the tanker safely - using paper charts; Black Rover is one of the dwindling band of ships which hasn't gone digital yet.

Perhaps that's not entirely surprising. Black Rover is one of the oldest ships in the RN-RFA inventory (she was launched in the autumn of 1973).

"The ship's been well maintained, well looked after. For a 35-year-old tanker in the South Atlantic, at sea a lot of the time, she looks good," her CO Capt Stephen Norris RFA says proudly.

The ship's company take a lot of time to clean her. If people are proud of their ship, it really does show."

It does. "You picture tankers as dirty, smelly things. They're not. Half the time you would never know you're on one," Capt Norris points out.

He's right. The only smell of diesel is down in the vast engine room (where, mechanics will be pleased to know, there is panel upon panel of gauges, dials and buttons, none of that computerised rubbish...).

Here the diesel engines power the tanker through the oceans at 18-19kts. And here, via a series of narrow walkways and stairwells you can climb from the bottom of the ship to the top, emerging, via the funnel, on the bridge wing - an experience unlike any other in the RN.

The tanker carries up to 4,500 tonnes of fuel (it takes about eight hours to top up the tanks when they're running low).

A typical RAS sees 250 tonnes of fuel pumped across every hour - enough to give a Type 42 'blue water legs' for about three days. Lusty or Ark require a little more. They guzzle around 200 tonnes of fuel daily.

Luckily for Black Rover, they don't

come down here, so most of the time she's either filling Clyde's tanks (mainly for exercise - she's not much of a gas guzzler) or the visiting Atlantic Patrol Ship.

Which is something she'll be doing until early next year, before popping back to the UK briefly, then returning to the islands for a four-year stint from 2010.

The ship is more than just a tanker. Like Clyde, she conducts patrols around the Falklands - she is regarded very much as part of the small Task Force 337 which safeguards this distant dependency.

"The Falklands are restful compared with the Gulf," says Capt Norris. "But there is a justified reason for being here. We know why we are here."

Certainly the locals never let the military personnel forget that their presence is welcome.

"You get a really warm feeling from the islanders," says communications officer 3/O Digby Denby. "Whenever you talk to them, you feel that they are grateful that we are here."

IT'S a feeling shared by Clyde's sailors.

"Falklanders view us as 'their ship'," says Lt Cdr Lovatt. "We have been very warmly welcomed and looked after. It's really quite a special feeling."

There is something rather endearing about Clyde's role. To be sure, she's a warship and can do warry things.

But so much of her work is more like the good old days of the village bobby, on patrol, saying "Good morning" to Mrs Miggins, dropping in on the parish church for a spot of tea.

The remoteness of many of the settlements around the Falklands - particularly on the west island, ten times the size of the Isle of Wight yet home to fewer than 200 people - means that Clyde can be their main contact with the outside world.

"We ask if there's anything we can bring them, offer medical advice, take fresh fruit and veg, say 'hello', talk about any issues affecting them, and highlight what we do."

"It's a fantastic insight into island life and a privilege to see such a different way of life. The longer you spend here, the more you understand the locals and how passionate they are about their islands."

PO Harding adds: "The islands are as you imagine, but what strikes you is how the locals live - they have a very strong sense of community."

For AB Mark Cross, who grew up in Barrow - birthplace of Invincible and Sheffield - the Falklands was "ingrained into us".

He adds: "It's a deployment which I have always wanted to do."

"To come down here, to see places you've only seen on TV, to get a feeling for what people went through - and achieved - in 1982 is quite profound."

"When you go past Antelope and Ardent, you still salute them - that's incredibly poignant. There's a huge sense of pride."

"To come down here, to see places you've only seen on TV, to get a feeling for what people went through - and achieved - in 1982 is quite profound."
- AB Mark Cross



● It's all Rover... (Top) The view from the tanker's bridge roof and (above) a check that everything's running smoothly in the engine room while (below) 3/O Digby Denby sends a quick Morse signal to shore





CLASSIC COM

THE pale light of the lamps in the loading dock gives the men a blue hue.

They check ammunition belts, inspect their rifles, check their kit one last time, smear camouflage paint on their faces. Mixed with the sweat running down their brows it glistens.

Reflective tape and glow sticks fixed to the back of the men's uniforms catch the light and glimmer.

Red and green navigation lights on the offshore raiding craft and a couple of commandos wearing luminous yellow jackets provide the only colour in this otherwise monochrome world.

The waters of Akrotiri Bay lap gently up the ramp in the loading dock. The drivers of the offshore raiding craft throttle their engines, spewing an acrid black smoke, before reversing into the night.

As they pull out, landing craft nudge into the dock, their exhaust fumes leaving a milky mist which sits on the water of the loading bay.

The commandos file aboard. Radio antennae stick out of the back packs of some, from others huge bolt cutters to prise through chain fence.

The craft edge slowly out of the dock. The pale light through the small windows fades to be replaced by a three-quarters moon and the stars on a crystal.

There's little banter, little talk, and the only artificial light is provided by the dull red glow of a landing craft crewman's cigarette.

There is just the drone of the engine for a good 15 minutes until it cuts out, then revs up again. There's



AFTER scattering across the western and central Mediterranean, the ships of the Royal Navy's flagship deployment of the year – Taurus 09 – gathered en masse for the first time off Cyprus' southern coast to practise the art of moving men and material from ship to shore. **Richard Hargreaves** reports.

a slight bump. More throttle to the engine. The craft glides forward slightly. Another bump. Whirr. Clank. The landing ramp is down.

The commandos leave the boat in rather more haste than when they clambered aboard. Some run into the water, some jump – and find the bay rather deeper than expected. A couple stumble.

All quickly cross the beach – a rather grandiose name for a very narrow strip of sand at the bottom of a rocky slope, pockmarked with craters and dissected by ravines.

The monotonous, throbbing sound of motors announces the approach of yet more landing craft. Indistinct dark shapes begin to move out of the darkness, bringing Charlie Company, 40 Commando ashore.

A quad bike with stretchers fixed to the trailer wades into the water then up the hill. There's the unmistakable outline of a Javelin anti-tank missile launcher strapped to a bootneck's back.

The landing craft draw back and disappear into the blackness. Shadowy figures move steadily up the incline before merging with the night.

Cyprus Wader has begun – and with it the RN's flagship deployment of 2009 has kicked off in earnest.

Arrayed left to right looking across Akrotiri Bay from the small port which is home to the RN Cyprus Squadron are HMS Ocean, RFAs Mounts Bay and Fort Austin, force flagship HMS Bulwark and tanker RFA Wave Ruler. Moving in between them – a very rare sight on the surface – hunter-killer submarine HMS Talent. (Lyme Bay is also part of the force but bad weather meant she was a couple of days behind, while escorting frigates HMS Argyll and Somerset were, temporarily, doing their own thing.)

It's a while since the Royal Navy 'did this' – certainly on these shores. There's been a lot of work amid the fjords of Norway, some exercising in Africa, quite a bit around Blighty, but sending an amphibious group to Cyprus and beyond, well you have to hark back a good while.

In fact, it's a good while since anyone's seen Ocean deploy to foreign shores – a substantial overhaul kept her out of action from mid-2007 until late last summer.

The helicopter carrier, says her CO Capt Simon Kings, has been "on the go" since last May – when she was still in the depths of refit in Devonport.

Since then she's emerged from that refit, worked up, passed operational sea training the deployed almost immediately.

"The ship's not done amphibious operations more than two years – there are a lot of people aboard who have no amphibious experience," Capt Kings explains (his ship's last deployment before refit was chasing drug runners, not moving marines from ship to shore).

"We've followed a simple plan: crawl, walk, run. Start slowly, then work your way up. It's a long process, but it works much better in the end."

Crawl-walk-run neatly sums up the opening stages of Taurus. There are major amphibious exercises planned with the Saudis, in Bangladesh on the Malay peninsula and in Brunei before the final ships in the group return to the UK in August.

But with the task force mustered for the first time it's time to choreograph the most difficult of naval – and military – operations: assault from the sea to foreign shores.

The basics of amphibious operations are simple: put the right men with the right kit in the right place at the right time – then sustain them as they push inland.

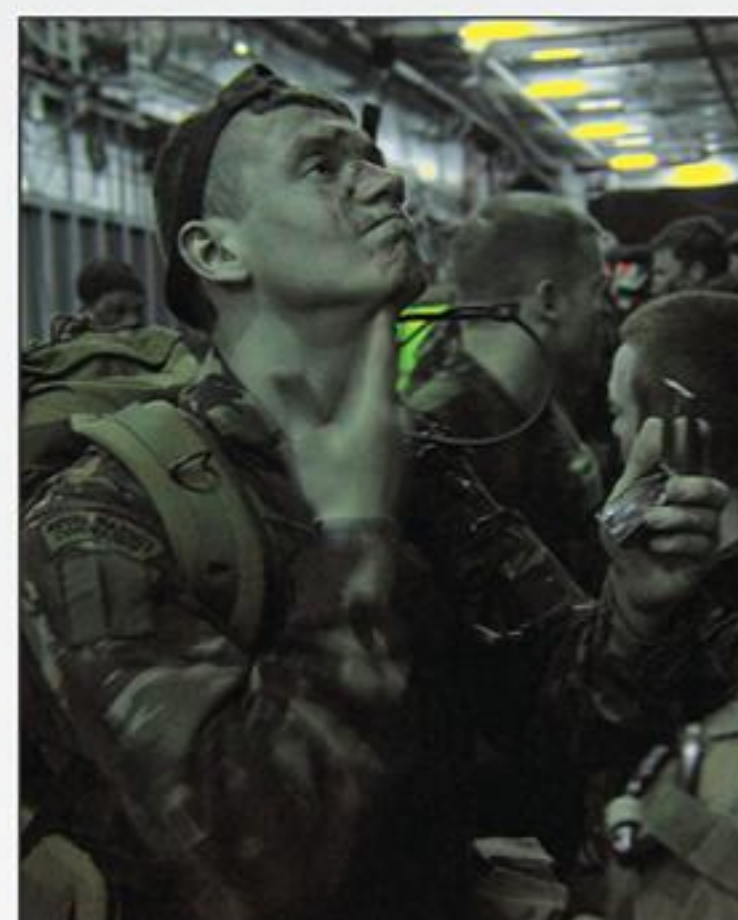
"Everyone likes seeing the task group formed here, getting all the moving parts into place," says Mounts Bay's CO Capt Kevin Rimell.

"We do a lot of training around the UK but it's important that we work somewhere different."

Mounts Bay has taken part in her fair share of amphibious exercises – West Africa, South-west England, the Arctic, even the waters of Brunei. There is, Capt Rimell, says "a wealth and depth of experience" among her ship's company, but as task force he points out, "we don't do this as often as perhaps we would like."

● Offshore raiding craft, a landing craft, Mexeflote, and Rigid Raider buzz around RFAs Lyme Bay and Mounts Bay off Akrotiri





IMANDO STUFF

In the bowels of his ship are Land Rovers, BVs, Vikings, Pinzgauers and other vehicles, but the 'primary weapon system' of the auxiliary – and the rest of the Taurus force – is 40 Commando.

Charlie Company – 85 of the Taunton-based unit's number (two platoons or 'troops') plus fire support troops with machine-guns and anti-tank weapons – call Mounts Bay their home today. And they're 'up for it'.

"You never get the full 'war' experience, of course," says Mne Simon Jeffries, "but everything is done in such a way that it feels real."

"The adrenaline's pumping and you do get nervous – you don't want to mess up and get any stick from the lads."

The assault has all been planned down to the minute:

1730 Hours: men to assault stations;
1800 Hours: board the landing craft;
1915 Hours: boats depart;
1945 Hours: beach secure;
0030 Hours: attack begins;
0200 Hours: enemy defeated;
0545 Hours: picked up from the beach;
0630 Hours: back aboard Mounts Bay.

A 19-year-old green beret intelligence analyst has marked up the target for tonight – an ammunition compound – on a satellite photograph: the guardhouse, wire fences, accommodation blocks, ditches.

It is, says Maj Ed Moorhouse Officer Commanding Charlie Company, "classic commando stuff. In at last light, sneak up in the dark, wallop."

"This is us shaking out, testing the system, good grass roots stuff. We couldn't do it at this time of year

in the UK, so it's a cracking training opportunity."

It is. And his company's attack is only one piece of the Wader jigsaw. All have to be slotted into place tonight.

Except that the right men are split between three ships – the two Bays plus Ocean – as is their kit (ditto, plus Bulwark), the right place moves depending on weather (and enemy) conditions, and the right time has a habit of changing.

"A plan never survives contact with the enemy," explains Cdr David Mahoney, HMS Ocean's Commander Air (aka Wings) paraphrasing the great Field Marshal von Moltke (although he, of course, said it in German and in a rather convoluted

fashion...).

"The enemy can be the weather, an aircraft being unserviceable, and you have to start all over again."

Tonight it's both. The surf on the beach earmarked for the assault is too much for the landing and raiding craft. A Jungly's not serviceable so that rules out the planned air drop.

Plan B is that night drop by landing craft on the 'beach' south of Akrotiri Mole.

Instead of a quick yomp from the original beach to the enemy compound there's a rather longer yomp the entire breadth of the peninsula.

Or perhaps not. The route from the beach to the objective runs through an RAF married quarters. "You don't want a camouflaged bootneck in your back garden in the middle of the night," Maj Moorehouse points out. (*Oh I dunno – Ed.*)

Instead, BVs and trucks ferry them to their destination – saving them a seven kilometre night march across the base of the Akrotiri peninsula.

By dawn it is all over. The men are back aboard Mounts Bay. Landing craft shuttle from shore to ship. A Merlin hops between Fort Austin and Ocean. A Jungly with a load slung beneath it flies among the task group.

All ten helicopters with Taurus (excluding the Lynx with the two Type 23s) are based aboard Ocean

– a mixed bag of Merlins (for pinging and general duties), Jungly Sea Kings (although they won't be operating in the jungles of Malaysia and Brunei as they depart the force shortly) and eye-in-the-sky ASaC Sea Kings.

"Flying operations have been non-stop – 24-hour days," says Cdr Mahoney. At the peak of the exercise there were 100 deck landings a day on Ocean.

"It's good to have a busy flight deck, but flying operations are an alien experience – exposed, noisy, dangerous, hectic."

As it's been two years since Ocean did this in earnest, it's worth remembering some of the basics. Such as don't fly a Merlin over the stern ramp and Mexeflote – infamous for its very potent downdraught, the helicopter must make a wide approach to the carrier's flight deck.

And then there's the Cypriot air space to contend with. There are two major international airports – Pafos and, especially, Larnaca – nearby, plus RAF Akrotiri right on the doorstep of Wader.

But that's not necessarily a bad thing. The task force has been making use of aircraft from Akrotiri for air defence exercises (and the deep bay permits some nimble manoeuvring from the warships, even close to shore).

"For us, Cyprus is a

great place to train. It's always nice to train

somewhere other than the south-west exercise

areas," explains

principal warfare officer

Lt Cdr Richard Webster,

directing the battle in the

helicopter carrier's

operations room.

Like Bulwark (although it's by no means as cavernous), Ocean has a double ops room, one to 'fight the ship', one to oversee amphibious operations.

"The weather is obviously better in Cyprus, but it is a different environment, different beaches, and it's a very important logistical test. It's important that we can operate away from home on this scale," Lt Cdr Webster adds.

Which brings us neatly on to logistics... With an air group and Royal Marines aboard, the Mighty O's ship's company has swelled from a little under 400 to 850 now (early March), rising to 1,200 when it reaches Brunei in a couple of months' time.

And that places enormous demands on the galley.

"It's a food factory," says LLogs 'Hatty' – "with a 'y', not 'i-e'" – Hatfield. A factory with a varied output – at least four choices of hot evening meal (and sometimes as many options for lovers of duff).

There are 11 chefs on duty per watch. The first

meal – a very early breakfast – is served at 3.30am for watchkeepers; the last scrum is a midnight meal for the night fliers.

With the commandos on board, it is a 24-hour-a-day operation, but at least it's simple.

"Royals are easy to feed," says Hatty. "Rice. Pasta. Cheese. Put cheese on anything and Royal will eat it."

He'll eat it twice, in fact. The green berets have been known to return for seconds. "I'd rather people come back for more than us chucking it away," says Hatty.

And talking of waste... We don't normally get excited about gash, but in Ocean's case we will.

The ship is testing a new gash disposal system, a pyrolysis plant. As 'pyro' suggests, it involves fire – basically burning compacted gash with very little oxygen, using the gash itself to sustain the fire.

What comes out of the plant is five times smaller than what went in. It's packed into tins and disposed of the next time Ocean enters port.

"It's far, far better than the old system," says Lt Cdr Neil Pearson, Ocean's senior engineer.

He has time to talk more gash now perhaps that he and his team don't have to devote quite as much time to fixing Ocean's machinery post-refit.

The ship was extremely tired when we last visited in the Caribbean in the summer of 2007 having been flogged for the best part of a decade.

The 90-strong marine engineering department had a real job on their hands keeping the carrier running.

"We're not suffering the problems our predecessors suffered,"

said Lt Cdr Pearson. "A lot of hard work has gone into her. Ocean's much much more reliable than she was – she's in a better state for the next ten or 15 years."

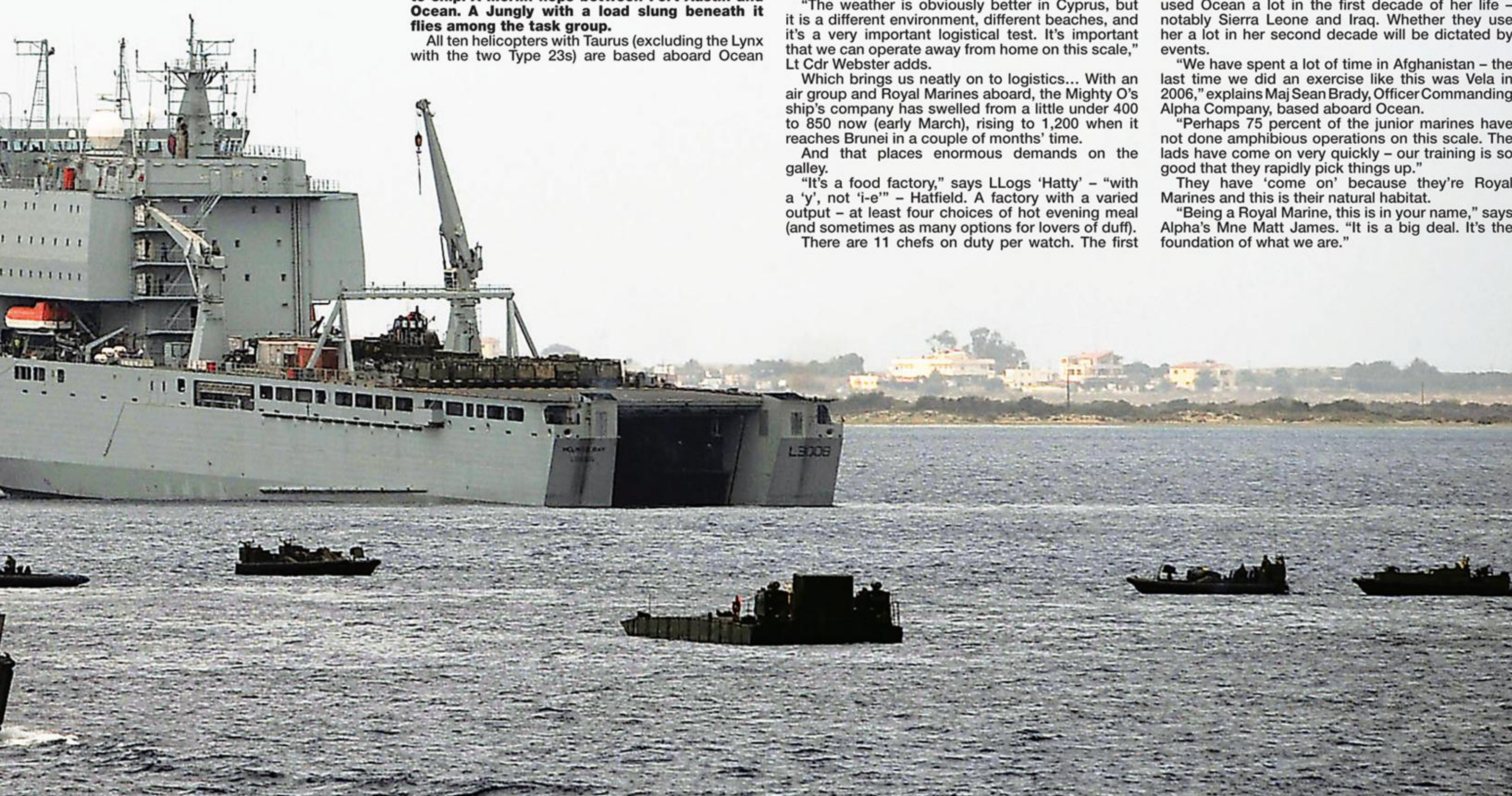
Which is good news for the Royal Marines. They used Ocean a lot in the first decade of her life – notably Sierra Leone and Iraq. Whether they use her a lot in her second decade will be dictated by events.

"We have spent a lot of time in Afghanistan – the last time we did an exercise like this was Vela in 2006," explains Maj Sean Brady, Officer Commanding Alpha Company, based aboard Ocean.

"Perhaps 75 percent of the junior marines have not done amphibious operations on this scale. The lads have come on very quickly – our training is so good that they rapidly pick things up."

They have 'come on' because they're Royal Marines and this is their natural habitat.

"Being a Royal Marine, this is in your name," says Alpha's Mne Matt James. "It is a big deal. It's the foundation of what we are."

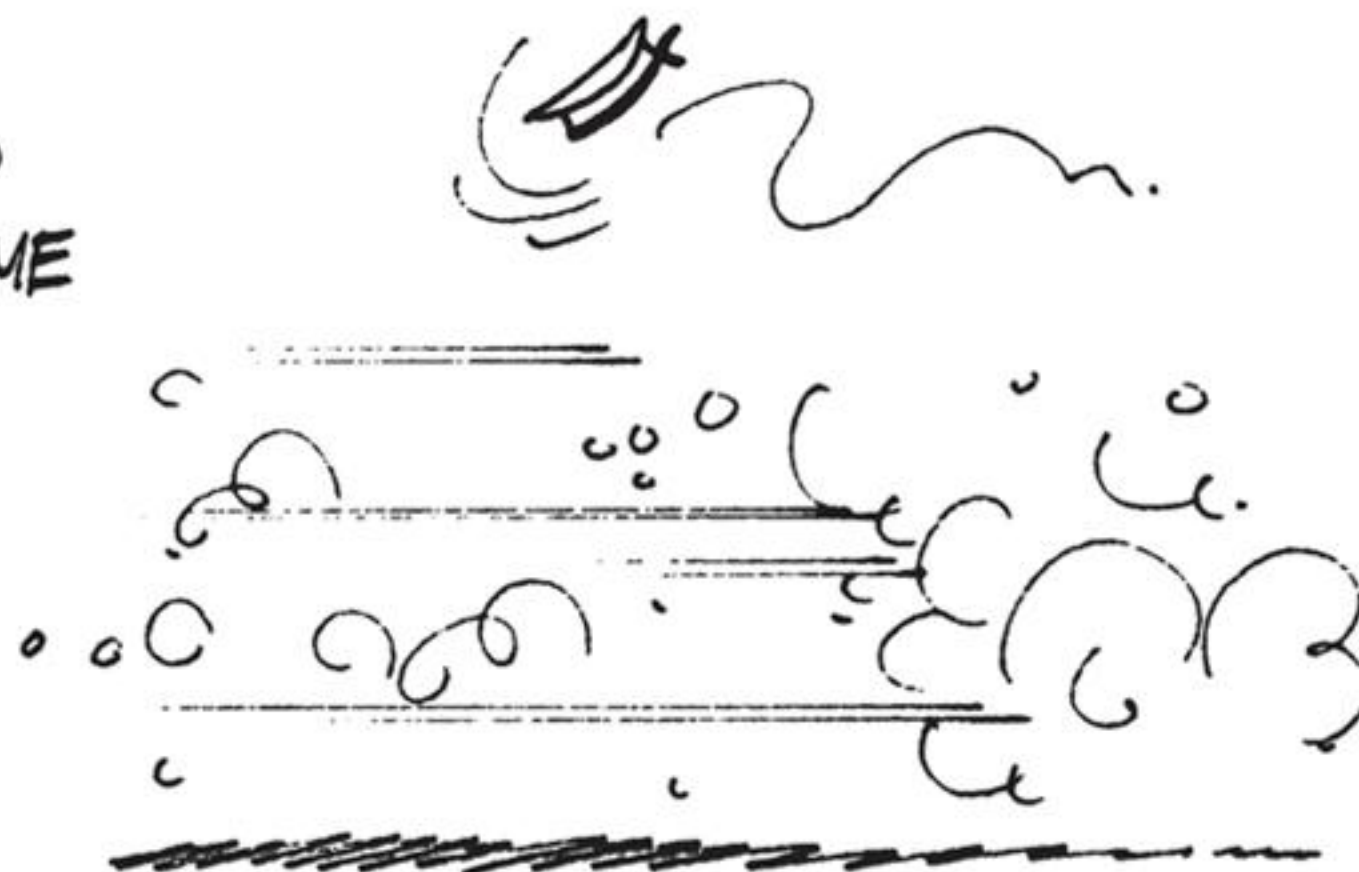




CLASSIC JACK

DEWHEAR THERE!

THERE IS A MISS VAN DER LUSH
AT THE FORD BROW WHO WOULD
LIKE TO TAKE A YOUNG HANDSOME
BRITISH SAILOR TO



BY TUGS

We want a National Defence medal

SUCCESSIVE governments have continually ignored the loyal and steadfast service from many of our Armed Forces personnel.

The unofficial Veterans' Badge is barely visible and is no substitute for a medal.

Many veterans believe that we should follow the Australian lead with a National Defence medal.

Our award system is unfair, archaic and anachronistic, hence diminishing military service.

The British public should rally round and support this laudable campaign, since several Service personnel have nothing to show for years or even decades or service to our country.

Further information can be found at www.nationaldefencemedal.webs.com

— Charles Lovelace (Vice Chairman, Veterans' National Defence Medal Campaign) Liphook, Hants

...THOSE OF us who served in the 1970 and '80s didn't do it for medals or even the money

The last medals awarded to anyone in my family were to my father and grandfather.

My brother served from 1966 to 1980 in the Royal Navy and I from 1977 to 1981 in the RAF Regiment, so my family has served this country for the best part of a century.

If we'd been in the US forces you'd need to have an extension to house all the medals, and that's just the ones they get for opening the cereal box, let alone those for each time they landed in a foreign country.

My grandfather had seven medals, dad got two, my brother and I absolutely zero.

Anyone looking at me on Armed Forces Day wouldn't even know I'd served our Queen and country.

Even if we purchased a blazer and badge, they'd assume we'd never made it out of barracks let alone sweated blood in the jungle in Belize or frozen our knackers off during North German winters.

I think it is time our politicians and civil servants stopped telling us how proud they are of us, and show it by giving us all a National Defence Medal.

— David M Kelley, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire

...THE WHITEHALL assertion that the activities of 'developing Commonwealth countries' had no influence on decisions reached by the UK is a direct insult and slap in the face for every ANZAC and Canuck that has put out for the Mother Country in every modern conflict, save the Falklands War.

As an Australian citizen, I take great umbrage at this insult. Developing countries indeed!

I am sure that none of us deem ourselves as lesser men than all of those veterans from other lands who have been shown some appreciation by those that govern in their lands.

I am fed up with being treated as though my time in uniform was of no account whatsoever.

To all those who feel that this idea of a National Defence medal is a valid and worthy one, I urge you to make your feelings known.

— Gerry Peck, Australia

Standing up for the Corps

WHAT is happening to those men who once wore the Globe and Laurel with pride?

Why do they shun the Association and the comradeship that it brings and why, when the occasion demands it, do they deny that they were once members of the most famous corps in the world?

When I attended the Mountbatten Festival of Music in February in the Albert Hall, as usual the band and the corps of drums were in tremendous form.

The auditorium was full to its capacity. The Captain General and his entourage filled the Royal boxes, adding to the splendour of the occasion, and as always I endeavoured to play my part.

In full evening dress, medals, corps bow tie, corps cufflinks, corps watch (all 90th birthday presents) and the biggest gold crest I owned on the waistband, I suppose that I looked different from the norm.

So what, for many years I have never tired of telling all and sundry that I was, and still am, a Royal Marine.

On this Saturday in the Albert Hall this feeling of pride was overcome by a feeling of shame.

I sat enthralled at an unusual (to me) Corps of Drums, followed by the whole band, filled every corner of the vast hall with the Commando March *Sarie Marais*.

Ark's home for the aged

WILL there be a further cutaway of Ark in her final configuration?

Comparing the cutaway with what I remember of her, there were some quite significant changes to accommodation.

If memory serves me well, there were two or three Chiefs' Messes on four deck back aft; the one I lived in was known as 'the geriatric ward' from its location



I gazed around this vast auditorium. There was not one single person standing, despite the fact that prior to opening I had seen many Royals wearing their blazers around the bars.

There was more shame to follow. It was the Grand Finale and I was ready, a roll of drums and the most famous band in the world poured out the naval march followed by the one and only *A Life on the Ocean Wave*.

I was already on my feet. Once again I gazed around me, I was astounded, I was standing alone, not one of the many hundreds of blazer-clad Royals stirred from the comfort of their seats.

I felt no embarrassment, I did what I have always done, and always will.

To add to my surprise, to my right sat a senior Royal Marine Officer who was proud enough to attend in full mess kit and medals but not proud enough to stand for his Corps.

I would say to him as many have said to me: "You lead by example, sir."

I hope that all vets who attend future events will read this and remember that 'Once a Marine always a Marine' and stand for a few moments, if only to say thank you to those young men who are more than maintaining the high standards that you set and who, even as I write, are showing the world that they are not only the elite, they are the best.

— Bernard Hallas, former Cpl RM, Haxby, York

opinion

Ever since the days of Anti-Submarine Warfare training at Tobermory, FOST has had a fearsome reputation for demanding excellence and getting ships and their people to realise their potential.

Recently celebrating the 50th anniversary of the sea training organisation its reputation remains fully deserved and its services are in demand from navies all over the world for good reason.

Some things have moved on and many will not mourn the passing of the dreaded green foulie into history – although the FOSTIES then as now were always the first to say that they were "here to help"... it might just not seem like it at the time (I am told that some even enjoy the experience).

The result however is the same – lessons learnt are often *The views expressed in Navy News do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Defence*

hard but enduring, and by the end of training a ship's company will have developed from a disparate collection of individuals into a cohesive unit with the confidence to get on with their operational task whether that is to fight, provide disaster relief, police the oceans of the world or turn their hands to any other task required.

From Tobermory to Portland and now at Plymouth, the FOST organisation has come a very long way and not just in geographic terms – now it not only encompasses surface ship, submarine and RFA sea training from cradle to grave but also includes the shore training element to provide a fully coherent training package.

It is a particular jewel in the Royal Navy's crown, the envy of all other Navies and sets the standard to which they aspire.

NAVY NEWS

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Pinta here

I HAD a few emails from mates asking what I'd been up to after they read *Navy News* and I had no idea what they were on about until I saw it, it was awesome and I'm like some kind of Z-lister now among my shipmates.

I thought I'd take this opportunity to keep you updated (now that I'm a star). I'm trying my hardest to raise money for charity, again all the profit from my canteen is going to the pot.

I cycled the Kiel canal with two other lads, and we threw in 20 quid each for the pleasure.

And last but not least we have finally chosen the two charities for this deployment's effort; the RNA because we feel that they get overlooked a bit (and it will be good to have a beer with them) and Help the Aged.

This one is because there is a lady called Jan Lyon who has written to RN ships for what seems like forever.

I first saw a letter from her whilst serving on the *Endurance* in the 90s and not only that, she sent everyone onboard a small gift at Christmas time, God knows how much that must have cost her, and pretty much every ship I've had thereafter has had a letter or ten from Jan.

So the lads have been sending her postcards from all our stops and she loves it. When in one of her letters she told us that she lost her partner of over 30 years, we were gutted for her and I asked if we could raise money for a charity of her choice – so Help the Aged it is.

– PO(MW) 'Pinta' Beer, HMS Brocklesby

Pinta appeared in Navy News in our December, January and February issues. So in March we couldn't resist mentioning him for no reason at all in our Brocklesby story... Glad to know you and your mates are reading us, Pinta! – Ed

Can you tell what it is yet?

THIS YEAR marks the 50th anniversary of Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) whose activities many years ago were to have a marked influence on my civilian life (see pages 36-37).

As a young lad back in the 80s I spent all my holidays in Swanage, Dorset.

I kept illustrated diaries of the natural history that I observed along the Purbeck coast and also recorded the Navy activities offshore (an illustrative page right).

I did not know at the time that I was watching the exercises of FOST operating out of Portland, and never realised that Thursdays were especially busy – the 'Thursday War'.

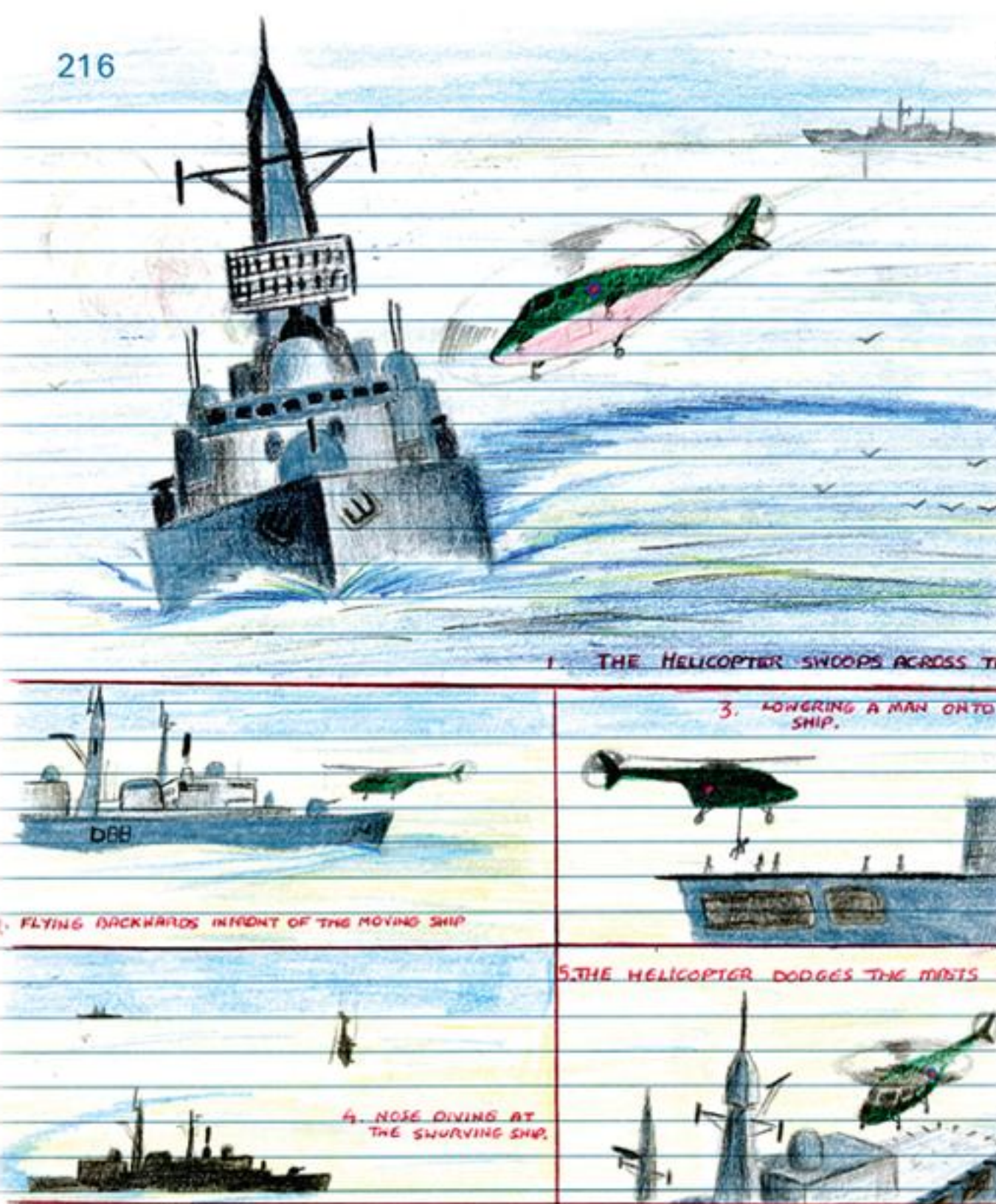
I keenly drew a number of ships, some now consigned to the history books, and a few that are still going strong.

I took great joy in trying to steady my binoculars and identify who was doing what and why, dramas unfolding out on the high seas.

All of this left its mark, and in 1999 I found myself living and working in Plymouth – FOST's new home.

There were great opportunities for Royal Naval Reservists to get involved, usually as an ugly mob putting a ship through its Force Protection training.

I joined HMS Vivid and have spent many days since steadying my binoculars on the bridge of our fine ships looking back at the coast I know so well, revelling in my part of who is doing what



and why.

The activities of FOST demonstrated to me at an impressionable age the excitement of Royal Navy operations and the

Reserves gave me direct access to them.

Happy Birthday FOST, and thank you.

– Lt Rolf Williams, RNR

Scapa's off my holiday list

I READ with amazement Capt Clink's rhapsodic reference to Scapa Flow (March) and I can recall Ludovic 'Uckers' Kennedy's comment back in the 50s 'the rare beauty of Scapa Flow'.

They must have been at the pink gins! We matelots regarded Scapa as the sinkhole of the UK, land of the constant drizzle and chilly wind, with an attendant shower of shitehawks wheeling, nagging and screaming for gash.

Scapa: where Jack went ashore to the tin canteen and downed vast quantities of dodgy NAAFI beer hoping to down the clinging terror of his next Russian run.

Scapa: where a shore-based matelot brought a small tree from the mainland and planted it with the sign 'The only tree in Scapa'. It blew down, of course. So he nailed it to a post... and that blew down.

Perhaps the view from the wardroom ports is a little rosier than that of the mess decks – or am I being a little bit bolshie?

– Maurice Cross, (ex-Bunting tosser HMS Seagull) Bristol

Bring back Stewards

WHOSE jargon-infected mind devised the present designations for members of the RN Supply and Secretariat, sorry Logistics Branch?

For example, 'Logistician (Catering Services (Delivery))'. A steward is a steward, for God's sake, or to put it another way, a steward, by any other name, remains a steward.

I have also noticed the abbreviation Logs(CS(D)) in the Swap Drafts section. Why is Logician abbreviated to Logs?

I would be interested to see the branch badge abbreviations for the present unfortunate members of the so-called RN Logistics branch,

eg, Caterers, Chefs, Jack Dusties and Scribes. Hopefully they have, in spirit anyway, retained their 'Jackspeak' names.

'Logistician' is not listed in the Oxford English Dictionary, nor in Chambers, no doubt it's either US military jargon or was found in Wikipedia.

I wonder if they RAF and Army equivalent branches have suffered these aberrations?

– Michael Carrigan (WOSA RN Ret'd) Weymouth

If you think it looks bad in Navy News, you should hear them try to pipe for a 'Logistician (Catering Services (Delivery))' in a ship... – Ed

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone. If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.

Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News. We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

New name could make all the difference

UP to 20,000 Armed Forces pensioners could be better off through a simple rebranding of a welfare benefit, according to the Royal British Legion.

The Legion commissioned a survey last summer which found that 38 per cent of veterans, spouses, widows and widowers reported existing on an income below the benchmark minimum income for healthy living – £7,072 per annum for a single person (£136 per week) or £11,200 for a couple (£216 per week).

One significant factor, according to the RBL, is council tax, which has more than doubled since 1993.

Chris Simpkins, Director General of the RBL, said: "The Legion is regularly contacted by older people who struggle to pay their council tax from fixed incomes.

"Council tax benefit is meant to make the tax fairer by reducing tax liability in line with a household's ability to pay; it is therefore very important to older people.

"Yet only a little over half of all pensioners who qualify for council tax benefit actually make a claim, partly because of uncertainty about eligibility, an aversion to benefits or due to the complexity of making a claim.

"Research shows that take-up could be significantly higher and some 20,000 Armed Forces pensioners could benefit if council tax benefit was rebranded as a rebate."

The Lyons Inquiry into Local Government in March 2007 indicated that when the old domestic rates regime was in place, the term 'rebate' was used instead of 'benefit', and at that time take-up rates for older people were around 90 per cent.

That has now fallen to some 55-61 per cent, and the RBL-sponsored research, carried out by Ipsos MORI, found that 56 per cent of respondents believed eligible veterans would more likely claim council tax benefit if it were known as a rebate.

A 25,000-signature petition has been handed to the Government calling for a rebranding – part of the Legion's *Return to Rationing?* campaign which aims to highlight the plight of older people in the wake of the economic downturn. www.returntorationing.org.uk

Talking about the Buccaneer

THE first Newark Air Museum talk of 2009 will be of particular interest to veteran WAFUs.

On Tuesday June 30 (starting 8pm) Grp Capt Tom Eeles will tell of his experiences as a fast jet ground-attack pilot with the RAF and Fleet Air Arm.

Tom's talk, which includes video footage, will cover his conversion to the Buccaneer S2, with detailed descriptions of embarked flying from HMS Victorious.

The venue is Holy Trinity Community Centre in Boundary Road, and tickets cost £5. www.newarkairmuseum.org

Naval Quirks

A COLOURING BOOK? NOT MUCH OF A BIRTHDAY PRESENT..



Cyprus welcomes Belgian envoy

CYPRUS branch was pleased to welcome S/M Paul Van Hees, the Liaison Officer from the Belgium branch.

Belgium branch, like Cyprus, has some 80 members, the majority of whom are retired RN, together with retired international Naval and military personnel with backgrounds in the many international institutions in Brussels.

Belgium is run by Cdr Gavin Short, a serving officer with the European Union Military Staff, and meets at the Brussels Royal Yacht Club monthly except July and August, with the

highlight being the annual Trafalgar Lunch.

The last such event featured a Spanish admiral as guest speaker and proposer of the Immortal Memory.

As S/M Paul was unable to stay for the next scheduled meeting, a small welcoming committee headed by branch vice chairman S/M Ian Gould met him and took him on a tour of the Court Rooms at Episkopi Base – Paul works for the Justice Department in Belgium.

Paul also met the local Sea Scouts, as his branch is particularly interested in motivating

the youngsters and wished to make a donation towards their support.

At the regular Cyprus branch meeting, the death of S/M Freddie Humphreys was announced – Freddie was one of the first shipmates to join the branch.

The meeting was also addressed by WO1 Jon Wilson and Capt Nick Arrandale, who gave an overview of the history, structure and role in Cyprus since 2006 of the 2nd Lancers Bttn of the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, the current incumbents of Episkopi Garrison.

Dinner to mark 90th anniversary

THIS year marks the 90th anniversary of the Bristol Royal Navy and Royal Marines Old Comrades' Association – arguably the oldest of its kind in the UK.

It was founded in 1919 – predating the Royal British Legion by two years – by Herbert Henry Turner RM as a result of the Zeebrugge Raid on St George's Day 1918, in which a Royal Navy and Royal Marines force attacked the port in a bid to blockade German submarines.

Eight Victoria Crosses – six RN and two RM – were awarded as a result of the action.

The association is to hold its 90th annual dinner dance later this month aboard HMS Flying Fox, the Bristol RNR unit which is also the venue for the Association's monthly meetings.

Among those invited, in addition to the Lord Mayor of Bristol, are a number of senior Naval and Royal Marines officers.

Derby puppy appeal races past target

THE TIMING was a long way out, but then you can't account for the generosity of people.

The Submariners Association (Derbyshire) hoped to raise the money for a guide dog puppy, to be named Derby, and present the cheque at a milestone ceremony for the Navy's latest attack submarine.

That gave the veterans 12-18 months to meet their target – but the plans were ruined (in the best possible way) when the required £5,000 was raised in just a few months.

The event which took the appeal through its target was a collection at Derby County's Pride Park stadium during a match against Coventry City, when collectors raised more than £1,780 – almost £500 of which was gathered by a team from HMS Sherwood.

Rather than hang on to the cash, which they felt would have been wrong, the presentation was made last month to the Mayor of Derby, Cllr Barbara Jackson, in the city's Council House.

"The original plan was to have this event coincide with the launch or commission of the submarine and 12 to 18 months was allowed to raise the funds, but these were realised thanks to the generosity of submariners and the people of Derby in six months," said branch secretary Terry Hall.

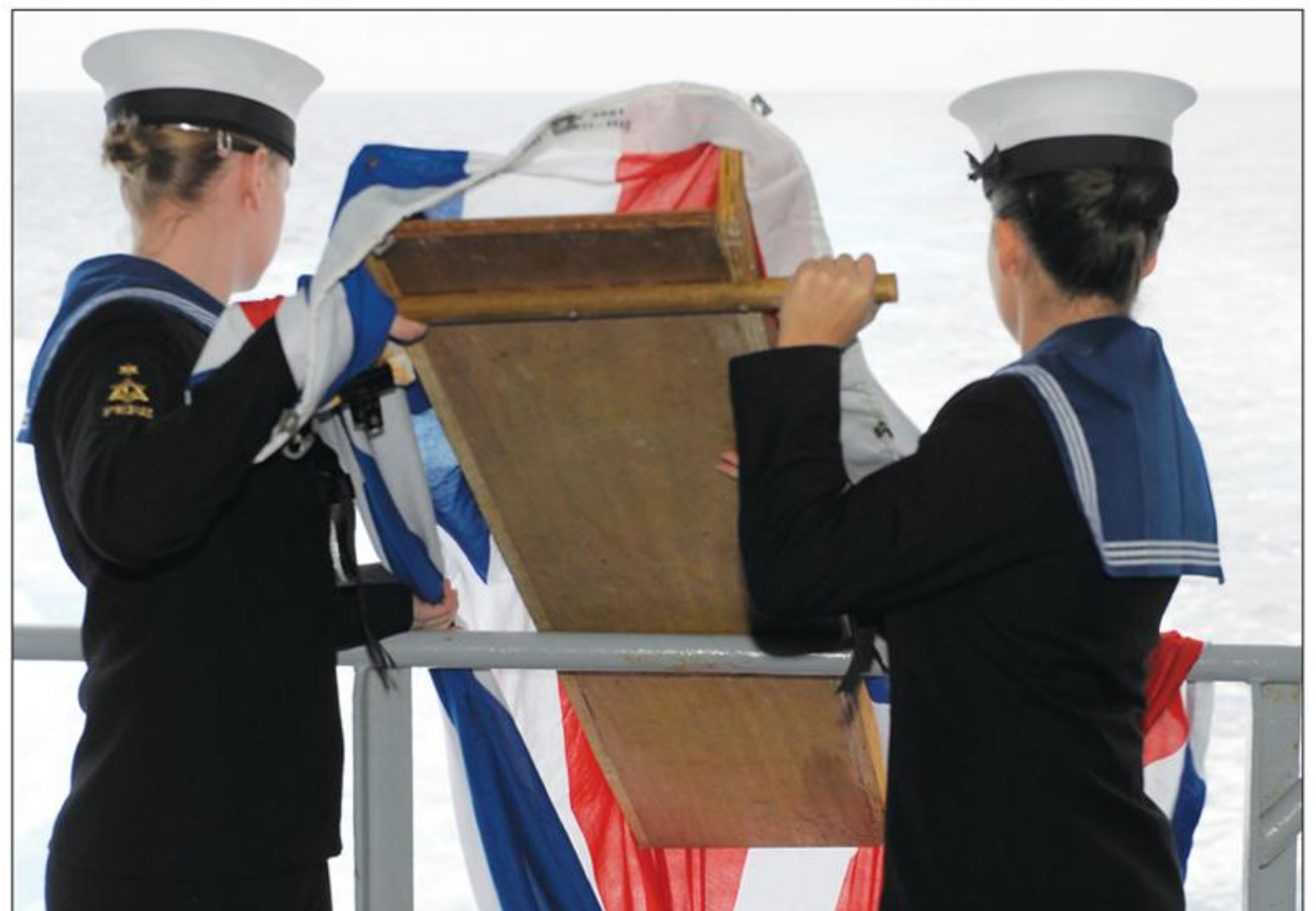
"We feel to hold on to the funds would be inappropriate, and we are proceeding to enable someone less fortunate than ourselves to benefit, and to have our walking memorial in commission later this year."

Also invited to the ceremony were representatives of HMS Sherwood, TS Kenya, the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association,

Derby County Football Club and Rolls Royce, as well as personnel from HMS Ambush.

The £5,000 donation will help train Derby the puppy, and

will help cement the affiliations between the association, the city of Derby and HMS Ambush, currently in build at Barrow-in-Furness.



● The ashes of Tony Smyth were buried at sea from HMS Ocean as the helicopter carrier approached the island of Malta
Picture: LA(Phot) Bernie Henesy

Last of a Naval dynasty

A SCION of a great seagoing family has been buried at sea from helicopter carrier HMS Ocean.

The ashes of Tony Smyth were consigned to the Mediterranean close to Malta – a station which made its mark on the sailor.

Tony was the last of a family who had been serving in the Royal Navy since 1830, when his great grandfather enlisted.

There was continued and

Double honour

TWO stalwarts at Dartford branch have been honoured with the award of life membership.

S/Ms June Gillam and Neil Ebbutt were presented with the their badges and certificates by chairman Ken Smith.

unbroken service by a member of the Smyth family up until 2001, when the last member retired – more than 170 years of naval history in the Smyth family of which Tony played his part.

Tony was chief writer on the previous HMS Ocean from June 1951 to March 1954.

Through the HMS Ocean Association, of which Tony was treasurer until 2006, he and his

wife were given a guided tour of the amphibious assault ship when she was in Barrow-in-Furness.

He was also on board at the commissioning of the helicopter carrier in Plymouth.

Some of Tony's fondest memories of the Navy were when he was stationed in Malta, so the casket containing his ashes was buried at sea at the carrier's closest point of approach to the island.

Petition pushes for Malaya rosette

A CAMPAIGN to gain recognition for those on active service in Malaya between June 16 1948 and August 31 1957 is submitting a petition to the Government.

The petition supports a call for an additional rosette to be attached to the NGSM/GSM, distinguishing those who served before Malaya's date of independence and those who served after.

Petitioner Joe Plant, an ex-REME Malaya veteran from 1955-7 said the document will be submitted to Parliament later this year by Sandra Gidley, MP for Romsey.

But Joe believes there are still plenty of RN veterans who could add their weight to the campaign, and as such is looking for support from associations linked with ships in Malayan waters at the time, air

squadrons and shore bases which supported the Forces.

Joe seeks contact with associations from the following ships in particular:

Alacrity, Alert, Ambush, Amethyst, Belfast, Blackpool, Bulwark, Cavendish, Centaur, Charity, Comus, Cockade, Cossack, Concord, Defender, Glory, Hart, Llandaff, Ocean, Perseus, Mounts Bay, Newcastle, Newfoundland, Norfolk, Simbang, St Brides Bay, Suffolk, Triumph, Unicorn, Warrior, Terror, 800 NAS, 827 NAS, 848 NAS.

For further information on the campaign, and to obtain precise details of addresses and suchlike to create a formal petition form, contact Joe at joaann@btinternet.com

NOW, NOW, SIR FRANCIS DRAKE USED TO COLOUR IN THE GRUESOME PICTURES IN FOXE'S 'BOOK OF MARTYRS'..



..TO WHILE AWAY THE LEISURE HOURS ON HIS FAMOUS CIRCUM-NAVIGATION OF THE WORLD IN 1577-80..



OH I SEE! IN ADDITION TO THE COLOURING BOOK, YOU'VE ALSO GOT ME A TICKET FOR A ROUND THE WORLD CRUISE !!





Collingwood service is planned for the summer

THE annual Collingwood Battalion Royal Naval Division memorial service is to be held on June 5 at 3pm.

The service will be conducted by the chaplain of HMS Collingwood and also taking part will be the chaplain of Blandford branch, who help plan and run the event.

This year an address will be given by Lt Gen Sir Robert Fry.

The service remembers the gallantry and sacrifice made by the men of Collingwood and their colleagues in other battalions – Anson, Benbow, Drake, Hawke, Howe, Hood, Nelson and the Royal Marines battalions.

The Collingwood Memorial, made of polished marble, commemorates those who gave their lives at Gallipoli on June 4 1915 and is situated at the entrance to Blandford Camp, a mile north of Pimperne village on the A354 Blandford to Salisbury road.

Organisers suggest meeting at the Anvil Hotel in Pimperne from noon onwards on Friday June 5, while the Chairman of North Dorset District Council and the Commander Blandford Garrison have invited attendees to join them for tea in the Headquarters Mess Royal Signals after the service.

Further details and forms are available from Stuart Adam, c/o Camvere House, Portman Road, Pimperne, Blandford, Dorset DT11 8UJ, tel 07877 944388.

Life back in Fife

FIFE Veterans Association (FVA) is a network of ex-Service personnel based in Dunfermline whose aim is to help military personnel integrate back into civilian life.

If you are a serving member of the Forces, or a dependant, and you intend to return to Fife, contact the FVA – they could help you, or you could have knowledge worth passing on.

www.fiveveterans.org.uk

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our February edition (right) was HMS Astute, correctly identified by Mr R Strickland of Plymouth, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's vessel (above) is a County-class destroyer, pictured shortly after completion in 1963.

She was the only one of eight to be built at a particular Scottish shipyard.

Can you name the ship and the shipyard which produced her?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish

Whitehaven standard is passed on

WHITEHAVEN branch has flown its standard for the last time.

In an emotional decommissioning ceremony held at Whitehaven's Sea Cadet unit, the remaining members of the Cumbrian branch drew to a close its 24-year history and links with the town.

The standard was then handed over to the cadets for safekeeping.

In front of shipmates from Millom branch and the entire ship's company of TS Bee, the standard was marched on to the deck by Marine Cadet Ben Abbott, flanked by Whitehaven branch secretary S/M Lily Robbs and chairman S/M Jim Park.

After saying a few words about the RNA, S/M Robbs called forward Leading Cadet

Amber Cartmell.

On behalf of the Whitehaven Sea Cadet unit, LC Cartmell accepted the duty placed on her by S/M Robbs "to guard and keep safely the standard in the hope that it may in the future be handed back to others who may come forward to re-form a Royal Naval Association in the town."

Amber then received the Standard from Marine Cadet Abbott and marched it off the deck 'at rest'.

After the ceremony the unit's Commanding Officer, Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR, spoke to the cadets and explained the significance of what they had just witnessed.

"This is a small piece of history and the end of an era," said Lt Lucas.

"Although sad that the RNA no longer



● Marine Cadet Ben Abbott, of Whitehaven Sea Cadets, marches on the Whitehaven branch standard, flanked by branch chairman S/M Jim Park and secretary S/M Lily Robbs

has a presence in the town, we are honoured that their standard has been given into our hands for safekeeping.

"It will not gather dust in a dark and forgotten corner but will be displayed proudly in our unit for all to see, and to

remember."

Lt Lucas added that Whitehaven RNA's first standard bearer had been a former Royal Marine, and he felt it was fitting that the last standard bearer was a Royal Marine cadet.

Root-and-branch remembrance

AN ILLUSTRATED evening talk entitled *Growing Remembrance* is to be held at Hinton Ampner, near Alresford in Hampshire.

The speaker will be David Childs, the founder of the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

On retiring from the Navy, David set about obtaining an area of disused gravel pits near

Lichfield, turning them into 150 acres of trees and memorials.

The Arboretum is now also home to the National Armed Forces Memorial, officially opened by the Queen in October 2007.

Hinton Ampner House and Gardens, owned by the National Trust, will be open for a glass of wine and the evening with David Childs from 6pm on April 23.

The illustrated talk will begin at 7pm and end at around 8.30pm.

Tickets cost £15 each, and proceeds will go towards essential maintenance on the ancient parish church of All Saints, Hinton Ampner.

Details and tickets from David Templeman on 01962 793009 or templeman@turnpike-cottage.freemove.co.uk



● The No 4 Area top table with their wives: from left, Mick Arnold (Area Secretary), David White (National Council Chairman), John Stuart (Area Chairman), Howard Jeffries (Area President), Paddy McClurg (RNA General Secretary, guest of honour) and Charles H Thomson (Area Life Vice President and MC for the evening)

Revels at Bideford

MORE than 200 No 4 Area shipmates and their guests attended the area reunion weekend at the Durrant House Hotel in Bideford.

As ever the weekend was judged a success by those who attended, with plenty of chances for shipmates to get together to swing the lamp.

Entertainment was laid on every night, with a church service on the Sunday followed by a SODS opera performed by area branches.

The highlight of the weekend was a formal dinner on the Saturday night with RNA General Secretary Paddy McClurg and his wife Kate as guests of honour.

For the granddads

A UNIVERSITY lecturer is undertaking a sponsored cycle ride from London to Paris to raise funds for the Association.

Inspired by two Navy veterans – his and his wife's grandfathers – Chris Mackintosh aims to raise £1,000.

The proceeds will be split between Bolton branch (where S/M John Smith was a member before he died last summer) and Durham City branch, for Chris's grandfather S/M James Mackintosh.

Chris, who is a senior lecturer in sports development at Nottingham Trent University, and a group of friends will make the 369-mile trip from HMS Belfast to Paris via Portsmouth in June.

The route will allow them to pay tribute at memorials on the Normandy beaches en route.



a winner.

Closing date for entries is May 13. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our June edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 170

Name

Address

My answers

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A Naval Charity for ALL service and ex-service personnel of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, QARNNS, and their Reserves



Kaizen chiefs predict savings

YOU might not realise it, but if you see someone driving around HMS Raleigh on a golf cart, you are witnessing kaizen in action.

Not a martial art, but it is Japanese – kai (change) zen (good) – and it's making things better.

The training establishment is taking a leaf out of Toyota's books (seen as the masters of kaizen) to run things more efficiently.

The nature of military forces means ideas and instructions tend to filter down from the top to the most junior members.

Kaizen (the official English translation is 'continuous improvement') reverses that.

"The CO is at the bottom, the junior rating at the top – these are the people who are the experts in their particular field, who have their hands on the subject," explained Emma Edwards, continuous improvement practitioner for VT Flagship, which runs much of the training and admin at Raleigh.

"It's about tapping everyone's talents. In many cases it's common sense, and it might be a very basic idea, but keeping it simple usually works."

Like the golf trolley, Raleigh's estate managers used to walk around carrying out their inspection work. Now they ride on the cart – and squeeze far more work into their day as a result.

On the range, wooden supports used in firing rifles have been replaced by concrete ones, which has improved marksmanship.

These and other suggestions netted £8,000 for bright sparks at RN training establishments – Raleigh's not alone in following the ways of kaizen – since the beginning of last year.

Senior staff officer for RNR logistics support, Cdr Ian Pethick, is among the converts.

He sat down with a group of reservist logistics specialists for a brainstorming session and found ideas were suddenly pouring in.

"In the three weeks since we got together, we've made a lot of changes – simple things like someone taking responsibility for distributing e-mails. People went away from the session, said they would do something – and they did," the officer added.

Kaizen faces its biggest challenge in reducing Raleigh's energy bill by one-fifth; the base has already started by fitting solar panels to heat the swimming pool.

Your DO knows

If you would like to know more about...

DIN 2009DIN01-044: Changes to PAX Scheme effective from 01 Apr 09.

DIN 2009DIN01-042: Annual Leave Policy Change.

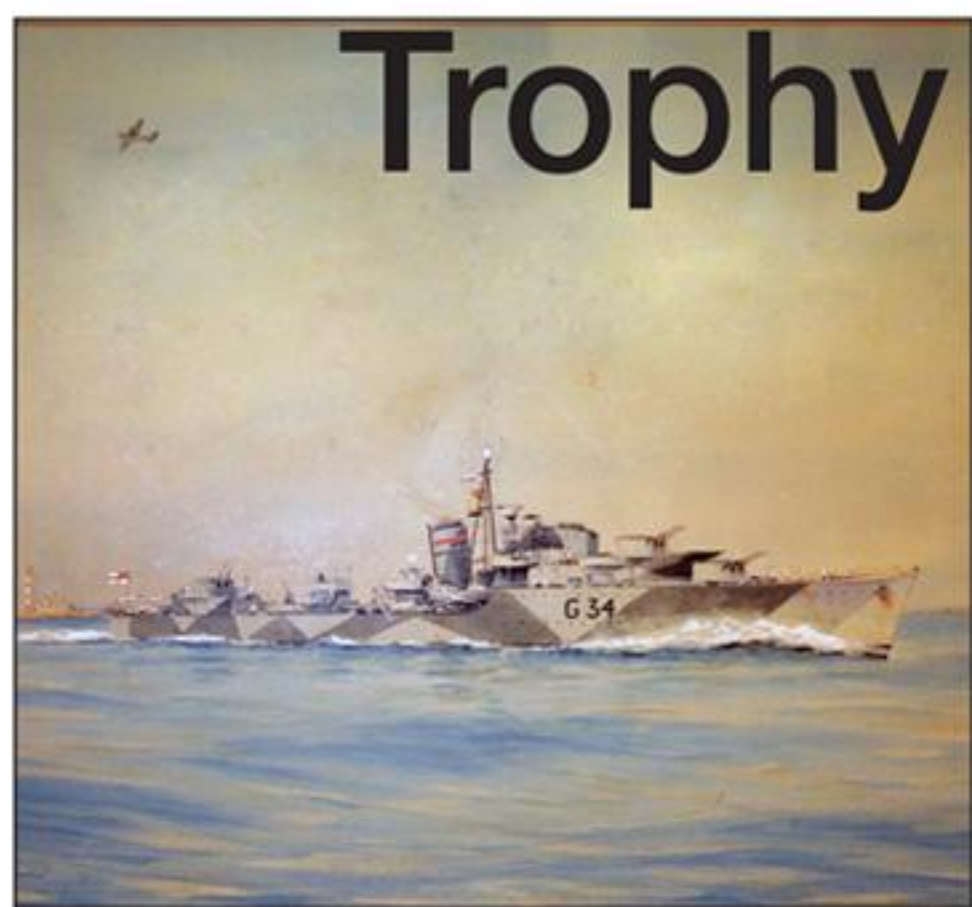
DIN 2009DIN07-029: Joint Service Alpine Meet (JSAM 09).

RNTM 41/09: Conversion to ET (ME SM) Specialisation for Nuclear Watchkeepers.

RNTM 43/09: Deployed Welfare Package (Overseas) DWP (O) Brief.

RNTM 050/09: RN Photographic Competition 2009.

RNTM 54/09: The open Golf Championship 13-20 July 09 ...see your DO.



● A detail from the painting of HMS Jaguar

Trophy honours first Jaguar

EARLY 1941 saw Erwin Rommel's mighty military machine still building towards peak performance.

The Afrika Korps was advancing across North Africa to Egypt, using the port of Tripoli to keep the wheels and tracks turning.

Fresh troops, weapons, ammunition, food and fuel was all pouring through the Libyan port, and the Suez Canal seemed to be at the mercy of Rommel.

Although British submarines made their mark against Axis convoys, Tripoli seemed an obvious target to the Allies.

Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Admiral Cunningham was opposed to an attack as his ships would be in the heart of enemy territory without protection.

But when the Admiralty suggested an alternative of scuttling battleship HMS Barham as a blockship in the harbour approaches, Cunningham reluctantly agreed to the attack, which took place on April 21 1941.

The Germans were slow to respond and Cunningham's flotilla – battleships Warspite, Barham and Valiant, cruiser Gloucester and nine destroyers – all escaped undamaged.

One of the nine was the first HMS Jaguar, pictured in Trophy no 7809; within a year the J-class destroyer had been sunk by torpedoes from U652 en route to Tobruk.

Only a fifth of some 250 sailors survived, and it was a group of those lucky men who presented the trophy to the second HMS Jaguar in memory of their dead shipmates.

What is Life in the Royal Navy like for you?

Tell us - your views are important



Pipe up – the Navy Board is listening

AN updated survey assessing views of Service life will be doing the rounds shortly.

The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFACS) helps policymakers determine trends in attitudes towards life in a dark blue suit, and is a key element in the Directorate of Naval Personnel Strategy's armoury.

The 2009 version covers issues including pay and allowances, deployments and assignments, career plans and personal development, accommodation, leave, and health, wellbeing and fitness.

The survey is continually tweaked to ensure the right questions are asked, and to make sure it is aligned with similar exercises in the other Services.

And the results are not only used by policy wonks to shape projects and initiatives, but are also reported to the Navy Board and published in the House of Commons Library.

The first tranche of the latest survey will be distributed at random starting this month, with a second wave pushed out in the early autumn.

Completed responses are analysed by researchers and not seen by the chain of command – anything said will be anonymous.

A summary of results will be published in *Navy News* and in the *Globe and Laurel*, and the full reports will be available on the RN web.

For more information contact Rachel Tate, the HR Research Manager, on 93832 5495 (BT 02392 625495) or email her at Rachel.Tate644@mod.uk

Glowing report for apprenticeship training

ROYAL Navy apprenticeship training has won an enthusiastic endorsement from the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

Following a four-day inspection in February, OFSTED published their report which awarded mainly 'Good' and 'Outstanding' grades for the programme and facilities provided for a total of 3,000 RN and RM trainees.

Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral Chris Snow said: "OFSTED's report is nothing short of a ringing endorsement of the excellence of apprenticeship training across the Naval Service."

"It is clear evidence that the Royal Navy is a top-class employer and demonstrates to young recruits and their parents that the Service offers first-class career prospects and training that provides them with the sort of skills that will equip them for life."

The inspectors considered key strengths to be:

- Outstanding resources,
- Outstanding provision in engineering,
- Very good development of good quality vocational skills,
- Very well managed training programmes,
- Good personal development of staff and apprentices,
- Good actions to improve quality of provision.

They also assessed as particularly good the Navy's system of pastoral and welfare support for trainees through the Divisional system.

Provision of engineering and manufacturing technologies, for the bulk of trainees (1,750) was classed as 'Outstanding', while 'Good' grades were awarded for public services training, the health and social care sector, and hospitality and catering training.

Overall, 'Good' grades were awarded for leadership and

management, effectiveness, capacity to improve, achievements and standards, quality of provision and equality of opportunity.

During the exacting thorough inspection, nine members of the OFSTED team visited 11 centres and interviewed 183 trainees and 125 military and civilian staff.

The full OFSTED report is published on the Office's website at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Engineering and logistics training is delivered in partnership with VT Flagship.

Apprenticeship completion times vary between 20 weeks for public service to two years for engineering, with each scheme consisting of key skills, an appropriate Technical Certificate and consolidation with work-based learning (NVQs) conducted both within the training establishment, in naval air stations and in naval ships at sea.

The RN and Royal Marines have

been engaged with the Learning Skills Council since 2002 and offer 11 Level 2 apprenticeships schemes and three advanced schemes.

All recruits joining the Naval Service each year are placed on an appropriate training programme at a number of establishments – 1,200 of them engineering apprentices at the RN Engineering School at HMS Sultan, Gosport and the Maritime Warfare School at HMS Collingwood, Fareham; 800 public service apprentices at the Commando Training Centre RM Lympstone; 270 business apprentices at the RN new entry training establishment HMS Raleigh, Torpoint, Cornwall; 160 IT apprentices at HMS Collingwood; 80 aircraft operations and handlers apprentices at RN Air Stations Yeovilton (Somerset) and Culdrose (Cornwall) and 400 at the Defence Medical Services Training Centre, Aldershot.

HMS Sultan is to host the next AEO Tech Update event this summer.

Delegates will meet at the Gosport engineering base to consider the subject *The FAA Engineer – Providing Aircraft Fit to Fight*.

More details on this biennial event, to be held on Wednesday July 8, will be communicated via the dedicated website www.aeo-tech-update.co.uk

RNPT out on the road

THE next RN Presentation Team events are:

■ Thurs April 2 at Glynwr University, Plas Coch Campus, Mold Road, Wrexham;

■ Tues April 28 at the Argyllshire Gathering Halls, Breadalbane Street, Oban;

■ Weds April 29 at the Ben Nevis Hotel and Leisure Club, North Road, Fort William;

■ Thurs April 30 at the Aros Experience, Viewfield Road, Portree, Isle of Skye;

■ Tues July 28 at Newbury Racecourse – the Berkshire Stand, The Racecourse, Newbury;

Anyone wishing to book a place should contact the RNPT on 020 8833 8020 or visit the website at www.royalnavy.mod.uk

Monkey business

A FIRM which produces portable power devices is offering big discounts for British forces on the front line.

Powertraveller has a range of gadgets which can run devices ranging from mobile phones and iPods to laptops.

The kit – which includes powermonkey, powergorilla and solargorilla – features chargers and solar cells to guarantee a power supply.

The firm said troops in Afghanistan – where the Royal Marines have a prominent role – have been ordering on a regular basis, and can benefit from considerable discounts; in one example a recommended retail price of £65 has been cut to £35.

For more details see the website www.powertraveller.com

Another product aimed directly at the Services looks to provide better-value personal insurance by avoiding overlaps.

Forces Financial has created personal accident insurance which provides cover for people off-duty, recognising that the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) covers injuries and accidents suffered on duty.

As such, Forces Financial claims their premiums start at a lower level than other products which provide round-the-clock cover, even while people are covered by the AFCS.

For more details see website www.forcesfinancial.com

AND while we are on the subject of outstanding education, the Marine Society's College of the Sea (MSCoS) has also garnered praise from the OFSTED team.

The College of the Sea aims to provide a first-class continuing education service for professional seafarers, both military and civilian.

Today, as an operation of the Marine Society & Sea Cadets, it offers tutor-supported distance learning courses to suit every age and ability, with study areas ranging from GCSEs and A-levels, through to postgraduate degrees.

OFSTED turned the spotlight on to the College in February, and inspectors declared: "The Marine Society College of the Sea offers an outstanding range of programmes to meet the needs of seafarers."

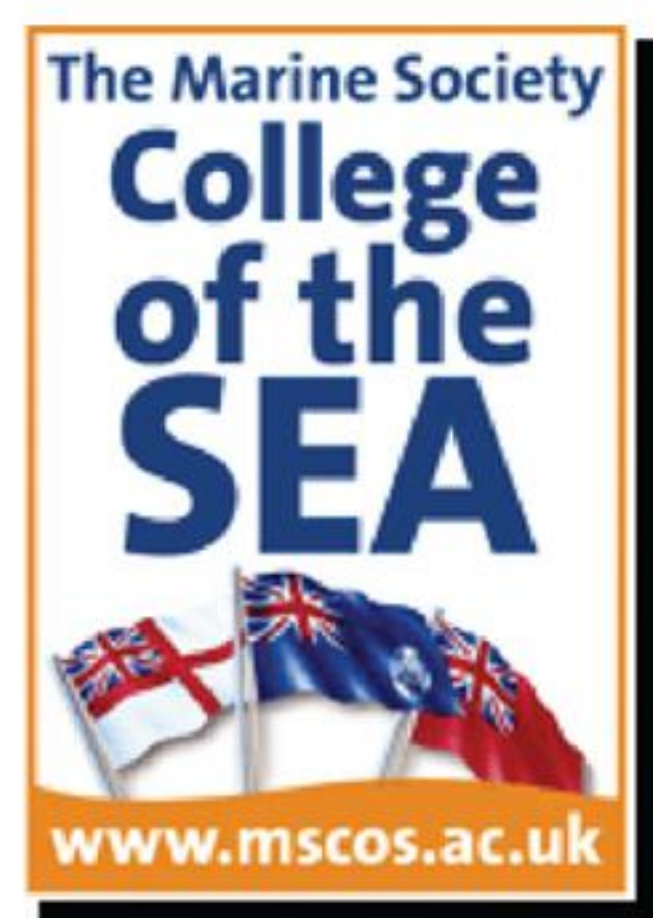
Inspectors added that "teaching and learning are good, with examination pass rates above national rates."

The College is an example of how the Marine Society has adapted over the years as the needs of Britain's seafarers have changed.

For more than 250 years the Society has supported sailors – Horatio Nelson served his time on the body's council.

Originally created to ensure a steady stream of suitable recruits for the fighting Navy, in time the Marine Society became less involved in recruitment and more interested in supporting sailors.

The College of the Sea was founded in 1938 as part of the Seafarers Education Service



(SES), itself founded in 1919 as a development of the Workers' Education Association (WEA).

It aimed to provide a level playing field (a *playing field at sea?* – Ed) so that the particular requirements of mariners are taken into account, a goal which endured when the SES merged with the Marine Society in 1976.

The MSCoS is non-profit making: a charity in partnership with the Royal Navy.

That means that taking your money is not uppermost on the MSCoS agenda.

The College's Director of Education, former RN schoolie Brian Thomas, told *Navy News*: "The MSCoS offers a range of other courses as well as its popular GCSE/A-level provision."

"It's fair to say it includes learning programmes and skills to

suit every taste, age, background and ability.

"We pride ourselves on taking learning to sea – delivering flexible learning solutions at the point of need."

The College currently has more than 400 learners at GCSE/A-level, and unlike most distance learning providers is a registered examination centre and can therefore enter students for exams.

Arrangements are made by the College for these students to sit their exams on board ships and at RN Learning Centres depending on where the mariner happens to find him or herself.

Last year arrangements were made for students to sit their exams in locations as diverse as the Green Zone in Baghdad and in southern Afghanistan, and in every type of ship, even the Trident nuclear missile submarine HMS Vanguard.

One student of the College, Mne Matthew Kemp, said: "Physics, in particular, posed a particular problem on account of the compulsory laboratory work in the syllabus."

"A-levels are definitely not designed for serving Royal Marines on active duty!"

"But nothing was too much trouble for the MSCoS, and they managed to overcome all the logistical difficulties."

"They even made arrangements for me to take the practical parts of the examination at a college local to my base in Exeter – it all went very smoothly."



TWO-SIX

Try a Surprise package



EXERCISE Bavarian Surprise has provided adventurous and challenging activities for over 4,000 Naval Service personnel in the Bavarian Alps over the past four years.

And the success of the German venture has proved the Naval Service requires an adventurous training (AT) centre.

The Naval Outdoor Centre Germany (NOCG) is a level 2 adventurous training and challenging activity centre, whose aim is to provide members of the Naval Service the opportunity to experience AT in a spectacular location capable of offering the full spectrum of activities all year round.

In the winter months – December to April – the centre offers skiing for the novice, teaching basic techniques in order to reach a Basic Ski Alpine standard, the first step on the ladder of AT ski qualifications.

Intermediate and advanced skiers will be introduced to ski touring and they get the chance to explore thousands of miles of off-piste skiing, once again leading to an AT qualification.

From May the programme switches to a summer setting, offering a multi-

activity package, including climbing, klettersteig (a form of multi-pitch climbing and scrambling on wires and ladders), mountain biking, kayaking, canyoning and white water rafting.

There is also scope for groups to organise bespoke AT packages, covering specific activities they would like to pursue.

This might take the form of five days of mountain biking with the aim of tackling black-graded mountain descents or five days of mountaineering.

Participants just need to approach NOCG staff with their plan and they will help the adventurers realise it – though bespoke packages may involve personal contributions.

The Naval Outdoor Centre Germany aims to support the Battle Back programme for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Battle Back is a new tri-Service initiative which aims to improve and formalise the use of AT and sport in the aftercare of wounded Service personnel in order to aid their rehabilitation and return to an active life.

Further information on this initiative will be published in due course.

The NOCG is also looking

to provide subsidised holiday accommodation for Naval Service personnel during leave periods; again more information will be published soon.

The NOCG operates out of Haus Schwaben, a civilian hotel run by Chesty and Tina and famous for its hospitality.

Haus Schwaben is situated in the small town of Hindelanghe in the Allgau Alps, 6km east of Sonthofen and 150km south-west of Munich.

Remember the NOCG is your centre! Pay it a visit to find out what you've been missing – 4,000 people can't be wrong...

There is no personal contribution, but because the centre is supported by both the RN/RM Sports Lottery and the Sports Amenities and Benevolence scheme, priority will be given to members.

The centre is already heavily booked for this year, but there is still the possibility of last-minute availability.

Further information on the NOCG is available at www.englishguesthouse.co.uk and follow the link to NOCG.

Sail Training in the modern Navy – see next month



● Skiing and kayaking – just two of the activities available in the beautiful Bavarian Alps



● Lights, cameras – er, action? BRNC is committed to film

Picture: Craig Keating, VT Flagship

New BRNC regime caught on camera

CAMERAS rolled at Dartmouth, but there was no Harry Potter-style magic to be recorded at the venerable old college.

The film crew from London-based production company CTN

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr Gregor Birse (Fleet Media Ops), 93832 8809.

was there to create a contemporary account of how the Navy trains its officers at Britannia Royal Naval College.

BRNC introduces the three term entry year with Officer Initial Training 09 this month, so recruiters, potential candidates and the rest of the Naval Service need to be advised and informed of the new regime.

Captain Naval Recruiting took on the task, arranging for CTN and digital new media agency twenty-six to cover all angles.

When a marriage fails, who has a claim on the pension?

DIVORCE is, sadly, becoming ever more prevalent, and it frequently leaves wives feeling isolated financially as well as emotionally.

When it comes to dividing up the assets of a marriage, the pension can often be the single most valuable item but the wife, although a potential beneficiary, is unable to gain a personal valuation.

Below is an extract from a typical telephone conversation regularly fielded by the help desk in the Forces Pension Society (FPS) from one of its members:

Naval Wife: My husband has left me and I am suing him for divorce on the basis of desertion; a friend told me I am entitled to half of his pension – is this true?

FPS: No, not necessarily. However, the value of his pension must be considered as part of your marital assets when it comes to dividing your marital worth between you and your husband at the point of a Decree Absolute being issued, just as any pension you own must be valued for the same purpose.

Naval Wife: So I might be entitled to more?

FPS: Possibly. You might also

be entitled to less.

Naval Wife: How will I know?

FPS: First, your husband must write to the Service Personnel & Veterans' Agency in Glasgow and ask them for a Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) of his pension.

This will tell you and your husband the value that his pension is deemed to be worth for negotiating purposes as part of reaching a full and final financial settlement following the collapse of your marriage.

Naval Wife: How long will that take?

FPS: Usually three to four months. The calculation is very complicated, and given the impact it can have on a divorce settlement, it is very important it is accurate.

Your husband will also have to pay a fee for the CETV's production; this is currently £150 plus VAT.

Naval Wife: What? He might not want to ask for one if that is the case. Can I get one?

FPS: No you cannot. CETVs can only be issued to the individual to whom the pension relates, or their legal representative.

Naval Wife: Do we have to

have one of these CETV things?

FPS: Yes you do; and it is in your interest too; for two reasons.

First, you may discover that other assets within your marriage (eg capital in your house, assets within the house, your own private pension, car etc) arrive at the same value of your husband's pension.

And if you have agreed to share the assets of the marriage on a 50/50 basis, you might consider it sensible to keep everything else in the marriage except your husband's pension.

That keeps all elements intact (no expensive legal fees needed for selling the house etc), and is less heartache to administer, and the result is that you have your 50/50 division of value of your marital assets.

Secondly, I know of one case where an RM sergeant decided he would not bother to get a CETV.

The procedure of divorce became more bitter as it went on, to the point that he and his wife could not agree to a financial settlement because he was, as he said "Going to lose 50 per cent of his pension anyway".

The judge decided that in settlement his wife should

be awarded 75 per cent of his pension!

You might like to point this out to your husband if he becomes a little difficult over obtaining the CETV.

Naval Wife: So I suppose it would be sensible for him bite the bullet, pay the money and move on, wouldn't it?

FPS: Yes it would. You might even consider offering to pay half of the costs associated with obtaining the CETV and administering any Pension Sharing Order that may be issued later, to encourage him to apply sooner rather than later.

If you are facing a similar situation or want help in understanding the rules and procedures about any aspect of an armed forces pension, you can contact the FPS on 020 7820 9988 or visit its website at www.forpen.org



TWO-SIX



NOTICEBOARD

A light on Deadlight

THE team behind the daily TV magazine programme *The One Show* are planning a feature on the greatest destruction of submarines in British naval history.

In the aftermath of World War 2, the Royal Navy sent more than 100 surrendered German submarines to the bottom of the Atlantic.

Of the more than 150 U-boats which were surrendered by the Third Reich at the war's end, four out of five ended in the hands of the Royal Navy.

Some underwent thorough testing and evaluation by British submariners and experts, but the decision was taken to sink most of the boats, held initially at Loch Ryan in Scotland and Lisahally in Northern Ireland, in Operation Deadlight.

Some of the boats were used as target practice, sunk by aircraft, gunfire, torpedoes and anti-submarine weapons.

The rest were earmarked for scuttling around 120 miles off the

northwest coast of Ireland at a spot codenamed ZZ.

The sinkings began in mid-November (nearly 60 boats founded before they reached the scuttling point) and continued until February 12 1946 when the very last boat, U3514 – a revolutionary Type XXI 'electro boat' – was sent to the bottom.

She was dispatched by a combination of 4in shells, close-range guns, and Squid anti-submarine mortars from HMS Loch Arkarig before finally slipping into the depths.

The weekday BBC1 magazine programme, *The One Show*, plans a four-minute film on the huge scuttling operation – hopefully featuring the memories of those who took part in Deadlight and images/footage of the operation.

If you remember this historical event or know someone who does then please contact Gemma Metcalfe-Beckers on 0113 203 4075 or by email to gemma@reallife.co.uk

Diary dates

MAY
May 1: Fly Navy 100 – Fly Past over Eastchurch Pioneer Memorial, Isle of Sheppey, Kent.

May 2: Army vs Navy Rugby Match at Twickenham. Tickets cost £18-20 (adults), £10 (children). Call 0870 444 6633, www.navyrugbyunion.co.uk.

May 7-8: Fly Navy 100 – HMS Illustrious in London – Centenary Fly Past Greenwich, London, 12 noon, May 7.

May 13-16: Royal Tattoo – The Massed Military Bands from all three Services at Windsor Castle. Tickets cost £15-£60. Available from 0871 230 5570 or online at www.windsortattoo.com.

JUNE
June 6: Collingwood Open Day and Field Gun Competition at HMS Collingwood, Fareham. Tickets cost £7 for adults, £4 for children/OAPS at the gate (£5 and £3 in advance). See www.royalnavy.mod.uk/server/show/nav.6943 for more information.
June 9-11: Beat Retreat – The Massed Bands of the Royal Marines at Horse Guards Parade, London. Tickets cost £12 (family ticket £40). Telephone 0844 847 2504 or

www.ticketmaster.co.uk.

June 27: National Armed Forces Day – main event at Chatham Historic Dockyard with smaller events going on through the week around the country. Find out more about the main event and events in your area at www.armedforcesday.org.uk.

JULY
July 11: RNAS Yeovilton Air Day: Celebrating 100 years of Naval aviation. See www.royalnavy.mod.uk/server/show/nav.4948. Tickets cost £21 (adults) and £8 (children) on the day, with concessions for advance booking (£17, £14(OAP) and £5. Call 08445 781 781.

July 18-19: Royal Navy Past and Present at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. Commemorating the 250th anniversary of the laying of HMS Victory's keel. Visitors will be able to board a modern Naval warship, amid many other displays. Enquiries: 023 9283 9766, www.historicdockyard.co.uk.

July 18-19: Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. Tickets cost £39.95, under 16s with paying adult go free. Visit www.airtattoo.com/airshow or call 0800 107 1940.

July 29: RNAS Culdrose Air Day. See www.royalnavy.mod.uk/server/show/nav.6201

SEPTEMBER
September 5-6: Navy Days: Meet Your Navy 09 at HM Naval Base Devonport, Plymouth. Tickets cost £14 (adults one-day) with concessions for pensioners and children, and multi-day entry. Ticket line 08445 78 78 78. Further information at www.royalnavy.mod.uk/navydays.

September 11: Dedication of Fleet Air Arm Memorial, National Arboretum, Staffordshire.

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Association of Royal Navy Officers

ARNO is the Membership Association and Charitable Trust for serving and retired commissioned officers of the RN, RM, QARNNS, the former WRNS and their Reserves.

The **ARNO** Charitable Trust provides advice and access to charitable funds for those members, their wives, widows and dependents who are in need and/or experience financial difficulties.

Membership Association subscription: £20 annually or a single payment of £500 for Life Membership.

Contact details; tel: 020 7402 5231 fax: 020 7402 5533 email: osec@arno.org.uk www.arno.org.uk

Please send me details and membership application form:

Name and address _____

to: Membership Secretary, ARNO, 70 Porchester Terrace, LONDON W2 3TP

Benefits of membership include;

- * an Annual Year Book which has many interesting articles and useful information
- * a secure on-line membership list
- * a special rate for roadside breakdown cover
- * temporary membership of the Naval Club, Mayfair, London
- * provision for buying and selling uniform and/or swords
- * an identity card
- * entitlement to various trade discounts
- * regional social functions (subsidised) and many more benefits and services

Reunions

APRIL 2009
HMS Speaker Association: Final reunion at St Margaret's, Westminster Abbey on April 27 at 1130; Reception with Mr Speaker and the Lord's Speaker before luncheon. Details from Neville Jones, 36 Quantock Court, Burnham on Sea, Somerset, TA8 1DL.

MAY 2009
HMS Victorious 1941-45 Association: A 25th reunion service will be held on May 10 at St Bartholomew Church, Yeovil on 1030 following by carvery lunch. Please contact Frank Short on 01981 540585 to confirm your attendance.

HMS Eagle – last commission 1969-72: Nautical extravaganza weekend reunion at the Northern Hotel, Aberdeen, May 15-17. Following on from brilliant and well-attended past two reunions, all Eagles plus wives, partners and guests very welcome to make this one even better. Meet and greet on the Friday followed by the choice of Whisky Distillery and Nautical Museum tours during the day on Saturday followed by nautical dinner, dance and entertainment including Sea Cadet ceremonial sunset. All commissions 1952-72 very welcome. For details contact Bill Melvin at bill.melvin@virgin.net, 07740 439987, or write to 4 Middleton Crescent, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, AB22 8HY.

HMS Exeter (D89): Crew of 82 Reunion taking place in Portsmouth on May 23. Please visit the web site <http://www.hms-exeter.co.uk> and select the forum link. All ex-crew members of the Exeter (D89) are welcome to join the forum. If you have any questions please contact Andy 'Nic' Nicholson at nic@hms-exeter.co.uk or tel: 07836 701583.

Omani Reunion: The 20th reunion of military and civilian personnel who served in the Sultanate of Oman between 1975 to 2009, is taking place in Hull, East Yorkshire from May 23 to 24. For more details contact Jim Dyson at jimandjan@jimandjan.karoo.co.uk or tel: 01482 846599.

723(CS) Kings Squad RM 1959-60: 50 years old! Reunion in Exmouth, May 21 to 23. Includes a Kings Squad pass-out at CTCRM. Details from Taff Prichard on 029 2079 0233.

HMS Antelope: The 2009 reunion will be held in the WO & Senior Rates Mess, HMS Drake on May 30. For further details please contact 'Shep' Ian Sheppard at shep@iscali.co.uk or tel: 07974 004713. Please do not contact if you have already passed your details to Bob Hutton.

JUNE 2009
HMS Intrepid Association: The first reunion dinner will be held at the Paragon Hotel, Birmingham, June 5-7. Tickets are free and discounted rooms (from £55 per night) are available. The price includes B&B, Friday hot buffet and Saturday reunion dinner and live entertainment. Contact the social secretary at socialsec@hmsintrepid.com, see the website: <http://www.hmsintrepid.com> or tel: 01207 283693.

Collingwood Memorial Service: The Collingwood RND War Memorial trustees and the president and members of the Blandford branch of the RNA invite you, your family and friends to the annual Remembrance Service at the Memorial on June 5 at 1500. Please wear medals/decorations. The chairman of the North Dorset District Council and the Commander Blandford Garrison have kindly invited all attendees to join them for tea in HQ Mess, Royal Signals, after the service. More information from Roy Adam on 01258 453797.

HMS Nubian Association 1964-66 Commission: Annual reunion will be held at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry, from June 12-14. For further details contact Jim Rotherham on 01246 433923.

SAMAB2 (Scotland): Did you serve in the Falklands Conflict? There will be a Falklands Veterans dinner at the Douglas Hotel, Aberdeen on June 13. For more details contact Ian Kaye at i.kaye@btinternet.com or Eric Smith, 4 Rolland Place, Drumlithie, Stonehaven, AB39 3YX.

HMS Kale Association: Reunion takes place June 23-25 at the Southdene Hotel, 94 Horsforth Avenue, Bridlington, YO15 2DF. Fall in, old hands. Contact R S Clay, 31 Cuckmere Way, Brighton, BN1 8GA or tel: 01273 552076.

Ganges Old Boys are holding a gathering at Pontin's Holiday Centre, Lowestoft, June 26-28, to celebrate their survival from Boy 2nd Class (or equivalent) to mostly the 'bus pass brigade'. A weekend away from politics – lawyers (lower deck or otherwise). All Old Shotley Boys welcome. Further information from Dickie Doyle at mail@slsloom.co.uk or tel: 0121 747 3680.

AUGUST 2009
HMS Glasgow (C21/D88): 29th reunion will take place at the Warwick Hotel, Blackpool, August 7-10. All ex-crew are welcome. Details from Allan Mercer, 89 Royal Avenue, Widnes, WA8 8HJ.

SEPTEMBER 2009
The Queen's School Rheindahlen: Association of former pupils and staff is holding its 2009 reunion in London on Saturday September 19. For more details contact Peter Williams at pdwilliams29@ukmarbatsstaff.com

Swap drafts

Logs(Pers) Kirstie Little. Current draft: UKMARBATSTAFF (shore-based, classed as sea-time). Would like to swap for: any Portsmouth-based Type 23 or 42. Contact: 0773 807 2494.

LET(ME) John Cain. Current draft: HMS Sutherland. Would like to swap for: any Portsmouth-based small ship, River-class vessel or survey vessel (ie HMS Scott, Endurance, Echo, Enterprise) would also consider a shore base or establishment. Contact: 398-letme11@a.dii.mod.uk.

Sports lottery

February 21: £5,000 – OMSSM I P Bryant, HMS Turbulent; £1,500 – AET1 P D Stocks, RAF Cottesmore; £500 – LETME G D Patter, HMS Ark Royal.

February 28: £5,000 – CH N M Kennedy, HMS Illustrious; £1,500 – Lt S F Lear, HMS Edinburgh; £500 – SLT L B Harrison, HMS Wildfire.

[yahoo.co.uk](http://www.yahoo.co.uk) or see the website at <http://www.queensschoolrheindahlenassociation.co.uk> or tel: 01837 840757.

River-class Frigate Association: 24th annual reunion to be held at the Royal Navy Club, Leamington Spa, September 19. Muster at 1100, lunch 1400. Castle-class frigates, Flower-class corvettes plus other escort groups are all welcome – as they all did the same job. This is the 24th reunion at the RNA Club so it can't be bad. Contact Ray Dodd, Clayleaches Farm, Arles Lane, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 3PZ or tel: 0161 338 4298.

Algerines Association: Autumn break at Mill Rythe Holiday Village, Hayling Island, September 21-28. Contact George Patience on 01456 450659 or Mike Hutchins on 01903 766895.

HMS Caprice (1968) Association: Reunion at the King Charles Hotel, Chatham, September 25-26. Visit Cavalier on the Saturday morning and reunion dinner that night. If you were aboard Caprice during her memorable world cruise in 1968, and are not already a member of our 75-strong association, why not join us? Meet some of your old shipmates and enjoy a nostalgic trip around the Cavalier. Contact Graham Latter at g@latter.karoo.co.uk, see the website: <http://www.hmscaprice1968.org.uk> or tel: 01482 632276.

Minerwarfare Association: Annual reunion will be held in the WO's and S/R's mess at HMS Collingwood on September 26 at 1930. Further details can be found at <http://www.mwassociation.co.uk> or by contacting the Secretary on 01329 333471.

OCTOBER 2009
Castle-class Corvette and Frigate Association: Annual reunion October 2-5 in Torquay. All ex shipmates and friends are welcome aboard this event which will be a special occasion to celebrate our 20th anniversary. To join the association and/or obtain further details please contact the secretary Mike Biffen on 0121 429 3985.

HMS Cardigan Bay Association: Annual reunion will be held at the Ramada Hotel, Ayr, Scotland, October 2-5. Contact Gordon Green at juliaandgordon@btopenworld.com or tel: 07948 800904.

HMS Crane U23/F123 (1943-62) Association: Reunion and AGM to be held at the Gateway Hotel, Nottingham on October 2-4. All details from Tony Nuttall at crane.bird@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 0115 9526363.

Nore Command RN PTI Branch Association: Annual luncheon takes place at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent on October 4. All are welcome. Details from Orlando Jemmett on 01227 263691.

Mauritius Veterans: Reunion for all those who served at HMS Mauritius (shore base) in the 1960s and 1970s. This will be held on October 10 in the WO & SR Mess, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. If you are interested in attending, please contact Tina Lowe at tina.lowe3@ntlworld.com or tel: 01329 843347.

HMS Exmouth 1968-71: The next reunion will be held at Hotel '53' in York on October 16-17. Anyone wanting further information should contact Mickey Dunne at michael.dunne7@ntlworld.com or tel: 01325 258193.

RNA Plymouth: 8th biennial Trafalgar weekend at the Anchorage Hotel, Babbacombe, Devon on October 23-25. Details from social secretary at artsue@chendera.fsnet.co.uk or write to RNA Plymouth, Chendera, 4 Rowan Court, Latchbrook, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 4UN.

Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association: Reunion, October 23-26, at South Downs Holiday Village near Chichester. Great weekend planned. Full board. Remembrance Service at St Ann's Church in Portsmouth Dockyard. If you are ex Royal Navy Electrical branch, this is where you should be to meet with your old Electrical branch messmates. Further details from Mike Crowe at mike@rneba.org.uk, see the website at www.rneba.org.uk or RNEBA, 7 Heath Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8PG.

NOVEMBER
Special Communications Unit (SCU): A reunion is to be held for all personnel who have either served as an RO(Sc), CT or as a member of staff of the SCUs at Tangmere, Leydene, Collingwood or GCHQ at any time. Wives and partners more than welcome to attend. Event to be held at the Cabana Club, Selsey on the evening of November 21. Anyone desiring to attend please contact Eddie Clamp at edward.clamp@btinternet.com or tel: 01243 605832 or write 10 Grove Rd, Selsey, Sussex, PO20 0AS.

OCTOBER 2010
HMS Ulster 1958-60 Commission: The final reunion was supposed to have taken place in 2008, but due to the success of that one, it was agreed to stage another in October 2010. Details of cost and the weekend package can be obtained from Norrie Millen at norriem88@hotmail.com or tel 07779 909691. Details also on website at www.candoo.com/ulsternorrie/ulster12.html.

AB1(Sea) Cole. Current draft: HMS Portland. Looking for a swap draft to any Portsmouth-based ship or shore draft. Contact: HMS.Porland.ABSea10.

Logs(CS(D)) Davidson. Current draft: HMS Ark Royal. Would like to swap for any other ship in Portsmouth or Plymouth – no carriers please. Contact: 07837 671558.

LLogs(CS(P)) S Duffy. Currently on HMS Albion will swap for any Devonport based T22/23 frigate. Contact: 9375 55054/54541 (from April 20 via the ship's exchange).

Honours

Operational honours and awards, which recognise service on operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and national operations for the period April 1 2008 to September 30 2008, is below:

AFGHANISTAN
Member of The Order of The British Empire (MBE)
Maj Sven Christopher Hanson, Royal Marines
Military Cross (MC)
Acting L/Cpl Stephen Burns, Royal Marines
Mention in Despatches (MiD)
Mne Matthew Corcoran, Royal Marines; **AB(Sea)1 Richard Andrew Hudson**, Royal Navy; **Sgt Malcolm Clive Pettitt**, Royal Marines; **C/Sgt Benn Adam Soutine**, Royal Marines; **Cpl John Robert Stephenson**, Royal Marines; **Lt Cdr Paul Tremelling**, Royal Navy
Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)
WO2 Wayne Anthony Hoyle, Royal Marines

IRAQ
Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)
Acting Lt Col Steven John Hussey, Royal Marines; **Lt Cdr Neil Kenneth Marriott**, Royal Navy; **CPO(CT) Gareth Neil Thomas**, Royal Navy

NATIONAL OPERATIONS
Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB)
Sgt Mark Sheraton, Royal Marines

NON-COMBATANT GALLANTRY
Air Force Cross (AFC)
Lt Cdr Martin Nicholas Lanni, Royal Navy; **Lt Michael Raoul Paulet**, Royal Navy
Queen's Gallantry Medal (QGM)
LACMN Kevin Regan, Royal Navy
Queen's Commendation for Bravery In The Air (QCBa)
PO Darren Andrew Craig, Royal Navy; **Lt Cdr Martin John Ford AFC**, Royal Navy

Ask Jack

HMS Tiger: Does anyone know the whereabouts of HMS Tiger's ship's bell? Contact Brian Joy at navy.bj3@ntlworld.com or tel: 020 8864 0978.

HMS Caprice: We are compiling the history of Caprice from 1944 to 1979. We are appealing for any photographs or information from anyone who was on board or associated with her during that time, especially during the earlier commissions before 1965. Material may be downloaded electronically if required. All contributions will be acknowledged and all original material returned. Contact Graham Latter at g@latter.karoo.co.uk, see the website: <http://www.hmscaprice1968.org.uk> or tel: 01482 632276.

Leningrad Visit: In July 1946, HMS Triumph, with Flag of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser proceeded to Kronstadt, then on to Leningrad and undertook a visit by personnel to Moscow. I believe we were the first visit of an RN ship after the end of hostilities. I served in the ARU and I believe our mess was 78. Amongst other highlights was the conveying of the Olympic Torch and part escort to HMS Vanguard in May 1947. In the mess was a great character, Spider Atherton who I hope is still around. I am seeking information anecdotal or pictures about the visit to Leningrad. I am planning a trip to St Petersburg later this year hoping to reminisce on my 85th birthday. Please contact Eric Osborne at ericsosborne@btinternet.com or tel: 01825 764342.

Sunflower II: I am trying to trace anyone who can recall serving on my boat in Scapa

Flow in WW2. The boat – 54ft long – had been a smart pre-war teak/mahogany motor yacht named then Sunflower II. I believe she was used as a work or post boat around Scapa Flow possibly manned by WRENS. She might be remembered for her mahogany cabins and wheel house, twin engines and two masts. As well as searching for any who recall crewing the boat I would also be interested to trace any details of the boat being taken up and any 'official' log of her service in the RN. Does anyone keep such historical records, I wonder? Please contact Paul Newgass at paulnewgass@btinternet.com or 9 Clarence Hill, Dartmouth, TQ6 9NX.

CPO Israel Harding VC and Sgt Norman Finch VC: The Royal Navy wish to invite relatives and descendants of VC holders Chief Gunner Israel Harding and Sgt Norman Finch to the opening of two new buildings on Whale Island in Portsmouth. If you are able to help find the descendants of either man please contact Heather Tuppen, Naval Base DPRO, at Portsmouth Naval Base on 023 9272 3737.

Assignments

Hon Cdre Sir Donald Gosling KCVO RNR has been promoted to the rank of Hon Rear Adm RNR with effect from March 2.

Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veteransagency.mod.uk
Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
RN and RM Service records: 023 9262 8779 or 023 9262 8667
Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk
Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk

Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, www.seafarers-uk.org
SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafa.org.uk
RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk
Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org
Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com
Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmarinesmuseum.co.uk
RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, www.rnsubmus.co.uk
National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

■ Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.

■ Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.

■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

■ Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.

■ Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Deaths

David Clarabut DSC, FAA Pilot. Because of his poor eyesight he failed Dartmouth but was accepted for the Fleet Air Arm; after initial training at St Vincent he was sent to Grosse Ile, Michigan, where he flew solo after just eight hours, then went to Kingston, Ontario to complete his training, flying in Harvards. He flew under the Thousand Islands bridge; and almost at the end of his training he was practising close formation flying when his wingman ran into him, his aircraft entered an uncontrollable spin and he struggled to open the canopy, bailing out so late that hardly had his parachute deployed than he struck the hard ice of Lake Ontario; he survived and hobbled ashore in sub-zero temperatures and was taken in by a woodsman and his son. In 1944 he took off from the deck of Furious in one of 21 Barracuda dive-bomber aircraft of the first strike of 827 and 830 NAS launched against the German battleship Tirpitz on Operation Tungsten, he swooped lowest at 1,200ft and at 45° angle and dropped his 1,600lb bomb and a dense column of smoke rose higher than his aircraft so he could only fly through this and in all the Barracudas claimed six direct hits and three probable hits. With several other aircrew he was awarded the DSC for his bravery, leadership, skill and devotion to duty.

Cdr Ted Ironmonger. At the age of 21 he obtained his amateur radio transmitting license and awarded the call sign GBPO and these skills led him to join the RN prior to WW2 and served in Cerberus and Vanguard in the Atlantic, Pacific and Far East Campaigns also at Mercury. After the war he was seconded to the Australian Naval Office and in 1962 he received the OBE in recognition of his outstanding service in the development and efficiency of radio and radar technology. After leaving the RN he joined the Admiralty Signal and Radar Establishment where he co-ordinated the installation of special radio equipment into merchant ships brought into service for the Falklands war. He had many technical articles published in radio magazines. January 21. Aged 91.

Eric 'Smudge' Smith. Served 1945-54 in Aisne, Chequers and at Palestine. Assisted Navy News with reader enquiries over many years. December 21. Aged 80.

Derek 'Delboy' John Hill. CPO RFA Cook. February 12. Aged 56.

Gary William 'Bill' Knapp. LEM. Served 1957-67 in Newcastle, Centaur, Bellerophon, Trafalgar, Lion and Ashton. HMS Newcastle Association and Ton-Class Association. February 16. Aged 71.

Derek Dawson. APO Air Mech(E) former LA Pilot's Mate. Served in 728, 736, 737, 766 and 804 NAS and in Glory (Korea), Seahawk, Falcon, Kestrel, Blackcap, Gamecock, Gannet and Fulmar. 14th Carrier Air Group Association. February 10. Aged 79.

John Henry Davis. Air Mechanic FAA. Last served Airbroth NAS around 1945. February 10. Aged 84.

Albert Hudson. PO Air Fitter. Served 1943-46 joined as a Stoker in Duke becoming a mechanic then trained on aircraft engines at RAF Hednesford repairing air craft with 3 Spitfire Squadron at RAF Holmsley, fuelled bombers for D-Day then special training for Typhoon and Tempest engines (Napier Sabres) serving at RAF Beaulieu and RAF Nadderby. Served in Striker, Arctic convoy and the Pacific; mentioned in dispatches after logging his leg under the tail wheel of an aircraft and successfully turning it to prevent it from going over board and spent three weeks in hospital. February 8. Aged 83.

Ken 'Lou' Costello. WO AA(O). Former Fleet Chief and Holbrook boy. Served 1939-73. Apprentice RAF Cosford, Halton, and Caledonia. First Rodney Division Aircraft Apprentices. Served various air stations including Lossiemouth and HMAS Albatross (Australia), Falcon (Malta), ships Speaker (escort carrier), Ark Royal, Albion, Ganges, Victory. HMS Speaker Association. March 1.

Leonard Charles Wager. Volunteered for the RN in 1941, joining minesweeper Fitzroy in April until she was sunk by a mine in May the following year. Then volunteered for combined operations, led by Lord Louis Mountbatten, where he served until the end of the war, where he was involved with the invasions of Sicily and the D-Day landings on Swordfish Beach. Left RN in April 1946. Awarded 1939-45 Bronze Star, Atlantic Star with bar, North Africa Star with bar, Italian Star, Defence Medal, Victory Medal. March 4.

John 'Jack' Reeks. PO(RO). Served 1942-46 in Atlantic Convoys, MV Empire Mackay (Mac), Implacable. Aged 85. February 25.

Robert 'Bob' Stephen Hirst. 43 Royal Marine Commando. Served 1943-52 in WW2, North Africa, Italy and Balkan Campaign (on islands of Brac and Vis), then served in Superb, Concorde, Comas, Cossack and Jamaica (Korea). Aged 84. February 21 in Vancouver.

Gerald Wallis. HMS Peacock Association,

served in ship as AB 1947-49. Aged 79.

Alan Barrett DSM. HMS Peacock Association, served in ship 1948-49. Aged 84.

Eric Evans. AB. Served in Vanoc 1943-45 under Lt Cdr Ward, Atlantic Convoys in Mediterranean, and involved in sinking U392 in straits of Gibraltar in March 1944. Aged 83. February 10.

Dave 'Scouse' Roberts. POREL(A). Served 1959-81 in various carriers and air stations. Ran in Fleet Air Arm Field Gun crew 1962, 1966, 1969, 1972 and 1976. Aged 67. January 12.

Lt Cdr Alec G Morley RNR. Served 1969-80. Weapons Electrical Officer, Camperdown, Tay Division and attached vessels. Aged 71. January 29.

John Edward Adcock. PO. FAA Aircraft Handler. Served Eagle, Ark Royal, Bulwark, Coventry (1982, South Atlantic). Aged 64.

Gordon Thomas Worthing. Seaman Radar Operator. Served World War 2 1943-46 with Light Coastal Forces, MGB 123 (MGB 446), ML 171, MTB 609. Took part in the Normandy Landings before being transferred to the Far East aboard Enchantress with British Pacific Fleet. Present at formal surrender in Hong Kong 1945. Coastal Forces and Normandy Veterans Association (Cardiff). Aged 84. February 17.

Lt Stuart William Eadon RNRV. Joined the RN at Royal Arthur in 1942 as a supply rating. Served in Berwick (Russian convoys), Formidable (landings at Salerno), Joined Indefatigable as Sub Lt at the end of 1943 serving on her for the attacks on the Tirpitz, oil installations at Sumatra, and as part of the British Pacific Fleet for the invasions of Okinawa. Author of two books - 'Sakishima', which told his and other shipmates' experiences on board Indefatigable during the Far East Commission and 'Kamikaze' which in part was a response to his first book from over 220 men representing 60 ships of the British Pacific Fleet. All profits from both books went to Naval charities. Life member of the HMS Indefatigable Association. Aged 86. March 7.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Thomas Beales. Served WW2 as a Leading Stoker in Knaresborough Castle. Past standard bearer for Thurrock branch. Aged 82. January 30.

Christopher Shellard. L/Seaman Radar. Joined St Vincent and served 1952-65 in HMS Implacable, Drake, Carisbrooke Castle, Cumberland, Harrier, Eagle, Dryad, Loch Alvie and London. Secretary and newsletter editor Southern Ontario RNA. January 18. Aged 72.

Terrance Somerville. ERA3. Joined as Artificer Apprentice at Figgard and served 1950-64 in Caledonia, Vanguard, Theseus, Warrior, Grapple Squadron (Christmas Island), Osprey, Scarborough, Sultan and Victory Barracks. Southern Ontario branch. January 18. Aged 75.

Anthony 'Tony' Bashford. Best remembered as 'Dilly the Clown' a musician and childrens entertainer. Southern Ontario branch. January 18. Aged 84.

Arthur Douglas Smith. WW2 veteran. Southern Ontario Branch. February 11. Aged 88.

Albert 'Bert' Henry Woods. ME (Stoker). Served 1943-47 in submarines; was in Spur during WW2 when a U-boat was captured and was present when the U-boat fleet was scuttled off Ireland after the war. City of Glasgow branch. February 6. Aged 82.

Arthur Pycock RM. Served aboard Cleopatra and Bermuda also in the Suez Campaign 1956. St Helens Royal Marines Association and RNA. Aged 78.

James 'Jim' Harper. Served 1942-46. Joined at 18 and as a signalman served at Greenock. Drafted to Battler but arrived too late and she had sailed (the ship never returned); escorted Russian convoys in Brissenden and D-Day landings then GPO tower, Singapore. Letchworth branch. February 2. Aged 84.

Cyril 'Squib' Cooke. World War 2 rating Seaman branch (AZDECS). Served on Atlantic and Malta convoys and Abercrombie. President Coventry branch; life member; member of RNA from commissioning; number 8 Area vice president (held every official post in the branch except standard bearer). Aged 87.

Albert Wood. Leading Torpedoman. Served 1939-45 in Mauritius, Nelson, Cumberland and Uganda, Atlantic, Malta and Russian convoys also spent time in South Africa; veteran of the D-Day Normandy landings. Dartford branch. January 29. Aged 90.

Jean Rayner. Associate member Norwich branch. January 24. Aged 79.

John Guy. AB. Served 1943-46 in Highlander and serving in Rotherham when she accepted the surrender of the Japanese forces at Singapore Naval Base September 6 1945; a member of both these ships

associations and Derby RNA. February 17. Aged 84.

Cecil 'Harry' Porter. AB. Served WW2 in Ceylon (cruiser) in Far East. Recalled Korean War period and served in Fetlar (Isles-class trawler) helping in submarine exercises in the Mediterranean. Hanworth RNA. February 13. Aged 83.

Arthur James Smith. AB. Served 1938-46 in Cornwall, Nestor and Napier. Beccles branch. February 11. Aged 87.

Ron Cross. Served for six years mostly on MTBs and was part of the support convoy for the early landings in Normandy on D-Day. Ludlow & District RNA. January 2. Aged 84.

Bernard Muddiman. Fleet Air Arm Handler. Served 1954-56 with sea service in Albion. Scarborough RNA. Aged 76.

Reg Lavers. L/Tel. Served 1942-46. Joined Royal Arthur, Skegness. Ships include Frobisher, Lanka, Assegai and Braganza. Former honorary secretary, Enfield branch and life member. Aged 85. December 4.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS
Capt D T L Baird VRD* RNR
Third Officer E M Collins WRNS
Cdr F L Eddy. Served Argonaut, Vengeance, Widemouth Bay, Harrier, Bermuda, Ark Royal, Dryad, Saker and President.

Cdr W A E Hall. Served Dorsetshire Blackmoor, Haydon, Stork, Crispin, Dryad, Salisbury, HMAS Kuttubul, Victory and President.

Capt T A Haydock RM
Lt D Hudson. Served Pembroke, Tamar and Rothesay.

Surg Vice Admiral I L Jenkins CVO. Served Centurion, Naval Hospitals Haslar and Gibraltar and MoD London.

Cdr J L I McCann RD* RNR
Lt Cdr A G Morley RNR
Cdr T M Myles. Served Condor, President and RANW Llangennech.

Lt P J Pope. Served Anzio, Drake, Caledonia, Hydra, Chichester and Pembroke.

Cdr J R Pritchard DSC. Served Nubian, Duchess, Highlander, Vidette, Burwell, Lancaster, Ajax, Peregrine, St Angelo, Barrosa, Maori, President and Bellerophon.

Surg Cdr J W Richardson. Served Daring, President and Naval Hospitals Haslar, Plymouth and Gibraltar.

Lt Cdr P R S Tallyour VRD* RNR
Lt Cdr L Warren. Served Collingwood, Belfast Scorpion, Contest and Dorsetshire.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
D Beal. Served on board LCP(L) 127, LCP(L) 268 and Tormotor. November 29.

D Gooding. Served on board LCT 754 and LC 1104. December.

R G Braybrooke. Served on board LCTs. January 27.

W H Poole. Served with LCS(M) Flotilla 904 and Chinkara. January 30.

C Crookes. Served on board LCI(L)s 502 and 511 and Lochinvar and Shrapnel. February.

Maurice Hillebrandt. Served on board LCT 959, Braganza and Lizard. March 1.

HMS ORION ASSOCIATION
Ed Jones. Supply & Secretariat aboard 1946. October 10.

Norman Fox. Stoker Mechanic HPE 1st Class aboard 1946-47. November 24.

Joe Byrne. Stoker aboard 1942-44. December 24.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
D R 'Doug' Barratt. PO TD2. Served in submarines 1941-50 in H31, P615, Telemachus, Alderney, Tantalus and RG'S'. London branch. Aged 88.

S R 'Stanley' Bracken. CPO EA. Served in submarines 1942-46 in H28, Stoic and Truant. Dolphin branch. Aged 87.

G 'Gerald' Horner. Stoker 1. Served in submarines 1943-46 in Unison, Unbending and Seadevil. Blackpool branch. Aged 84.

J 'John' Johnstone. PO(MID). Served in submarines 1940-44 in Proteus and Umbra. Scottish branch. Aged 90.

A R 'Tony' Miller. CPO REL. Served in submarines 1962-74 in Alliance, Thermopylae, Otus and Onslaught. Gosport branch. Aged 73.

C 'Chris' Sutton. L/Tel. Served in submarines 1943-44 in H43 and Templar. Bury branch. Aged 85.

W 'Bill' Woodhouse. Tel. Served in submarines 1951-55 in Scorch, Selene, Solent, Astute, Tudor and Teredo. Blackpool branch. Aged 82.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
Jack Thompson. Tel. Algerines Association, served in Wave. Aged 82. January 19.

John 'Jack' Bent. Sig. Algerines Association, served in Friendship. Aged 83. February 24.

Gerard Lathwood. AB. Algerines Association, served in Rosario. Aged 82. February 24.

1969 1979 1989 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see what stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● Prime Minister Harold Wilson enjoys a half-pint in the Senior Rates Mess with mess president PO Cromwell during one of his many visits to HMS Fearless during his premiership

April 1969

ASSAULT ship HMS Fearless got a last-minute call to host prime minister Harold Wilson and his party on board during his visit to Nigeria. Fearless cut short a refit at Malta and went on to Lagos via Gibraltar. The sailors saw little of life ashore as the Nigerians insisted that the matelots should be back on ship by 7pm. The assault ship was in the Mediterranean bolstering NATO maritime strength in the region.

April 1979

CARRIER HMS Bulwark was commended by Cdr Prince of Wales during the recommissioning ceremony for its new anti-submarine role. The aspect that particularly drew the Prince's attention? "It's the cleanest hangar I've ever seen," he said. The ship's hangar had been modified to provide a home for Sea King helicopters (no longer famed for their cleanliness among Naval circles - Ed).

April 1989

FIERCE weather saw the SAR crews of 771 NAS involved in three dramatic sea rescues saving many lives over just two days. After taking a man from a Spanish trawler to hospital the duty crew were called out to a ship which had gone aground - four of the crew were winched to safety, but unfortunately a fifth slipped and fell to his death. Next day brought a call-out to a listing merchant ship off Jersey, plucking 16 men from the sea.



THE ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Once Navy Always Navy

What the Association does:

Supports the Royal Navy
Enjoys social activities
Remembers the fallen
Looks after the needy

Maintains Naval traditions
Re-unites Shipmates
Helps the disabled
Cheers up the distressed

Stands together in Unity



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Rm 209 Semaphore Tower, PP70, HM Naval Base, PORTSMOUTH PO1 3LT

Phone - 023 9272 3747 E-Mail - Nigel@royalnavalassoc.com

Website - www.royal-naval-association.com

Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship

Where are you now?

Singapore: Searching for Chief (AE) Arthur Hunt, last seen in Singapore in 1964. Served RANAF Abbotsworth, NAMEB, Lee-on-Solent and Singapore. Jill Collins has news of Sgt Bray. If you have any information please contact Jill Collins, 10 Carre's Square, Billingham, Lincoln, LN4 4EL or tel: 01526 860543.

Federation of Naval Associations: Are you a member of an active Naval Association? Does it hold an annual reunion? Many associations are no longer active because of lack of membership. This is where the Federation can help your association to continue to function to hold a reunion in conjunction with the Federation AGM weekend, or to join us as an individual ship's company member and enjoy a weekend swinging the lamp. For details please contact the secretary Robbie Robson at robbie.fna@virgin.net or tel: 0191 584 7058

HMS Fire: Stuart 'Nobby' Hall is looking for anyone in 8 mess from 1966 to 1969 that remembers him. Contact Stuart at jeanandstu@hotmail.com or tel 00353 52 65843.

Gibraltar Dockyard: I would like to contact my commanding officer whilst I was at Gibraltar Dockyard from 1967 to 1970. He was then Lt Cdr Paul Jewell. I believe that he reached the rank of Commander. I was a dockyard civilian with the rank of Inspector Radio Workshop. I would appreciate any information on his whereabouts, e-mail address, etc. Please contact John Flood at flood@telkom.sa.net or write to 3 Samuel Crescent, Dnyefontein, Melkbosstrand, 7441, Western Cape, South Africa.

HMS Blake 1962-63: Seeking members

of the junior seaman's mess in Blake's first commission who would be interested in a reunion. In the first instance contact John Gould at john-sue.gould@virgin.net or 74 Springfield, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 8LH.

RN Electrical Branch Association: Relive the camaraderie of the Electrical Mess. Join The Royal Naval Electrical Branch Association. Hundreds have and enjoy 'runs ashore', 'up spirits' and 'great oppos' at the reunions and through the newsletter. No 'green rubs', 'duty watches' or 'men under punishment'. Not convinced? Visit the website www.rneba.org.uk and view the last reunion. The next one, to be held in the South, is filling fast and will be even better. Details from the website or Mike Crowe at mike.crowe1@btinternet.com or 7 Heath Road, Lake, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8PG. Join now, book your place at the next reunion and have a tot of Pussers with the president. The added bonus? Find your old Electrical Mess mates through the membership lists.

Ralph Unwin, ex 'T' Boats (Stand Fast the Trafalgar Class): Ralph Unwin was a Leading Stoker on HMS Tabbard and HMS Terredo out on the Malta Squadron 1949-53 serving with one of our Derbyshire Submariner members, Stoker Jack Winstanley. Ralph lived up in Chesterfield where his father was a bookmaker. Jack Winstanley has some photographs of Ralph's which he would like to return but has lost contact with him and would like him to get in touch. Please contact Terry Hall if you can supply any information at nobbyderbyssa@yahoo.co.uk

HMS Implacable: Did you join 351 class,

56 years ago, January - July 1953. Where are you now? Terry Rawe would like to hear from you. Contact Terry at dorothy@clix.net.au or write to 62B Frederick Street, Shoalwater, Western Australia, 6169.

Womens Royal Naval Association: Seeking new members to join the association in and around the Birmingham area. Meet monthly at the Nautical Club, Bishopsgate Street, Birmingham. For more information contact the secretary, Mrs Valerie McMinn, 8 Laurence Grove, Tettershall, Wolverhampton or tel: 01902 741616 or give Ruth Dunston a call on 0121 603 5290.

HMS Mercury: Trying to trace new entrants of classes T15 and R36 from HMS Mercury. We started training February 20, 1960. Myself and another ex-sailor hope to arrange a 50th anniversary reunion for next year. Contact ex-LRO(T) M Evans, 78a Clarendon Street, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 8LY.

HMS Daedalus 1975-77: Seeking anyone knowing the whereabouts of PO EL (Air) Pete Anderson who was an instructor in the Basic Training Group at HMS Daedalus. If anyone can help or give me a lead it would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Jim Maunder at jamesgmaunder@hotmail.com or tel: 0117 913 2039.

Survey Ship Association: Any past or present member of ships' company of any RN survey ship is eligible to join as a full member. For further information, send a stamped addressed envelope to: The Secretary SSA, 8 Grosvenor Court, 4 East Lodge Park, Farlington, Portsmouth PO6 1BY or email secretary@surveyships.org, or telephone 023 9279 1258.

Terror of Tobermory cr

FL A G Officer Sea Training may have just celebrated 50 years as an organisation, but its roots stretch back even further, to the dark days of the Battle of the Atlantic.

A dinner to celebrate the half century, to dine out Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson and to welcome his successor as FOST, Rear Admiral Chris Snow, was held at HMS Drake and featured a number of previous incumbents.

But the FOST founded in 1958 in Portland was merely a logical progression from the highly-effective sea training organisation set up during World War 2.

With Dönitz's U-boats threatening to strangle Britain, sinking thousands of tons of Allied merchant shipping, the Admiralty desperately sought a way to protect these vital cargo ships.

Retired Vice Admiral Gilbert Stephenson got a commodore's flag and was asked to create a training base as part of the Independent Western Approaches Command.

Such training would bring ships to the "highest state of efficiency possible in the short time available", and it was hoped that such an approach would help strengthen the convoy system.

Operating from the small fishing town of Tobermory on the island of Mull in Western Scotland, the base trained newly-formed crews on all aspects of operational capability – in particular the evolving art of anti-submarine warfare.

Cdre Stephenson's HQ was an old passenger ship, dignified by the title HMS Western Isles, and it was here that the "Terror of



● In the wardroom at HMS Drake for the FOST 50th anniversary dinner are former FOST incumbents. Pictured with Admiral The Lord Boyce, CINCFLEET Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, and Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Alan Massey are Vice Admiral Sir Roy Newman, Vice Admiral Sir John Webster, Admiral Sir James Eberle, Vice Admiral Sir John Coward, Rear Admiral P Franklin, Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson, Rear Admiral Sandy Backus, Rear Admiral Tony Rix, Rear Admiral James Rapp, Rear Admiral Roger Ainsley, Rear Admiral John Lipplett, Rear Admiral D Eckersley-Maslin, Rear Admiral J O Roberts, Rear Admiral Martin Alabaster and Rear Admiral Kerr. Rear Admiral Chris Snow, the newest FOST, is at the bottom right of the photograph

Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Gadd, FRPU West

Tobermory' made his plans.

As a rule, every ship in the Western Approaches Command spent a very uncomfortable two to four weeks working up under Stephenson and his staff, before taking up their escorting duties.

During training, every moment was deliberately packed with tension and exertion.

Damage control crews learnt the position of every valve, so

they could be located in the total darkness of a closed compartment below the waterline.

Gun crews learnt to fire six broadsides in 30 seconds, on a rolling wet deck with another turret firing over their heads.

Towing warps were rigged and taken over to consorts, in sea boats under oars. Steering motors broke down. All electrical circuits failed. The galley stove was knocked out

of action. Heavy depth charges were manhandled from ship to ship. Ladders went missing...

Fire in the wireless room! Torpedo to starboard! Lower the port sea-boat! Wire round the port screw! Ship not answering her helm – bow paying off to starboard! Take a fix on that light! Man overboard!

Drills which have relevance today were part and parcel of life at Tobermory – and very much set the foundations of Operational Sea Training for decades to come.

Stephenson was an efficient, strict and energetic man in his sixties whose fierce and controversial methods became much talked about.

If he thought an officer was not up to his job he would remove him forthwith and if Their Lordships down in Whitehall didn't like it, they could lump it.

He applied for a rum ration for his men but the Admiralty turned him down, saying his was not a sea-going command.

Undeterred, Cdre Stephenson up-anchored and took his ancient horse-boat to sea, returning to send a signal to the Admiralty renewing his request – casually mentioning he had just returned from a cruise round the Hebrides.

The rum ration for his men was duly approved.

He had a habit of cruising about the anchorage in his barge, boarding unsuspecting ships and roaring out alarming orders such as: "There's a bomb just gone down your funnel – what are you

going to do about it?"

But he didn't always get things his own way.

On one occasion he was creeping up on an old corvette at anchor when he was spotted by the crew, who managed to get lined up on deck before he climbed aboard.

But the admiral wasn't to be beaten. He took off his gold-braided cap and threw it down on the deck, shouting: "That is a small unexploded bomb dropped by an enemy plane – what are you going to do about it?"

The quartermaster, who had heard all about the admiral, promptly kicked it into the sea.

Stephenson immediately barked: "There's a man overboard – what are you going to do?"

THE shape of the work-up during the war will be familiar to the Senior Service today.

Following an initial brief by the commodore himself, the crew went back to their ship and that afternoon the various teams had training in their own specialities.

Radar ratings were given instruction on radar theory, lookouts were taught different scanning techniques for anti-aircraft detection, gun crews were taught at the spotting table.

More exercises followed over the next four days.

Officers and the radar, ASDIC and signal ratings of all ships in harbour mustered for a communications exercise to test the ships' action organisation.

The captain and plotting officer of each ship were placed in the defence of an imaginary convoy and one captain placed as the senior officer of the escorts.

On the sixth day a ship would sail for sea exercises, with gunnery and anti-submarine staff officers on board, who ensured no time was wasted.

Within 30 minutes they were chasing a surfaced submarine (simulated by a motor launch), an hour later they were firing against a towed surface target, and the afternoon was spent chasing a submerged submarine.

Intensity and pressure were relentless. In theory they were seven-hour days, seven days a week, but the commodore was not too rigid about working hours...

Each escort had to be taught how to respond to submarine attack as part of a group.

It had to learn every possible position in the escort screen, as it was impossible to predict how many warships would be present when a submarine attacked.

Every officer had to be able to start the procedure on a given signal, in case the Commanding Officer was away from the bridge.

For a sudden attack at night Plan Raspberry was developed; other plans which had to be instinctive were Pineapple and Banana, the derivatives of which – Plans Beetroot and Carrot – are still in tactical doctrine today.

The ships and men trained at

Tobermory went on to tackle the U-boat menace in the Atlantic.

The intensity of the training enabled men like Capt 'Johnny' Walker to carry the fight to the submarine.

In fact the tactics he evolved which were trained at Tobermory will be recognised by war-fighters today: anti-submarine plans for sending search attack units to attack submarines at range, convoy defence tactics, zig-zags, torpedo countermeasures, step-asides and search and attack plans, all have their origins in Tobermory.

SO a loose cannon, maybe, but he got results – almost miraculous results.

Eleven hundred and thirty-two unco-ordinated ships of mainly-inexperienced landlubbers passed through his hands and, in the incredibly short time of two to four weeks, were welded into a disciplined co-ordinated ship's company who were good enough to go straight out into the Battle of the Atlantic.

Some 130 enemy U-boats were sunk by Tobermory-trained ships manned by the 200,000 alumni of Stephenson and his sea trainers.

Worthy of note is that when Capt Stephenson was the CO of battleship HMS Revenge in 1923, he had under his charge a communications officer by the name of Lt Louis Mountbatten, who rose to become First Sea Lord and Chief of Defence Staff.

Stephenson made a considerable impression on him, as it was Lord Mountbatten's *Way Ahead* White Paper which established the post of Flag Officer Sea Training, whose organisation, based on the Tobermory model, became the established method of naval training.

In 1958 – the year that FOST was founded – there was a great deal of thought about the role and composition of the Royal Navy.

The main threat at sea came from Russia's vast fleet of submarines, so the UK deemed it wise to concentrate its naval forces on the anti-submarine role and to invest in deterrent to prevent war.

The first duty of the RN was to protect the sea lanes upon which the whole life and economy of the UK depended.

Despite this, in 1957-8 no fewer than six aircraft carriers, four battleships, seven cruisers, 12 destroyers and 64 frigates were scrapped.

Mountbatten was quoted as saying that the 'fat' had been taken off the Royal Navy; others thought that it was not only the fat but the skin as well, and that the Government was not taking out even the minimum insurance policy required to counter the 400 or so Russian submarines.

The first ship to take part in the Portland work-up was frigate HMS Llandaff, which arrived at Portland on October 20, 1958, with HMS Daring close behind.



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A PARTY from the Type 45 destroyer HMS Diamond has visited De Beers in London to renew the affiliation enjoyed between the company and the last ship to bear the name.

The visit included an excellent presentation about De Beers and the opportunity to handle various gems (though sadly no free samples at the end – Ed).

LLogs(Pers) Angela Bevan took a particularly keen interest in what De Beers had to offer, and felt especially comfortable holding a \$500,000 (£350,000) unpolished diamond.

De Beers host Bob Barltrop, kept a sharp eye on proceedings to ensure nothing left the room.

The Naval party enjoyed their visit to the Smoke and look forward to further working on a sparkling opportunity.

Back on the Clyde their ship is currently being fitted out in Scotstoun, Glasgow, and preparing for her inaugural sea trials, which are pencilled in for September this year.



● Bob Barltrop, of De Beers, takes no chances as LLogs (Pers) Angela Bevan has a good look at a \$500,000 uncut diamond

Her ship's company currently stands at 24, although this will have risen to 30 by Easter.

The state-of-the-art warship is also affiliated to the cities of Aberdeen and Coventry, the Worshipful Company of Barbers,

and the D-Boats Association.

Meanwhile the ship's sponsor – Lady Suzie Johns, wife of former Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Adrian Johns – is planning to return to her ship to check on progress later this year.

reated priceless legacy

A Times correspondent captured the essence of those early days at Portland, describing a pattern and trials which have a familiar ring.

"During shakedown," he wrote, "the ship carries out at-sea emergency drills and exercises designed to test each department."

"Seamanship drills are carried out, the ship's engines are run at varying speeds, emergency steering methods are checked, the ship's guns and anti-submarine mortars are fired, and the vessel's communications, radar, and ASDICs are checked and calibrated, all in slow time."

"A warship is a complex unit," wrote the correspondent.

"Besides the day-to-day domestic affairs required in catering for her complement, she has to be ready at all times for both the expected and the unknown."

"During her commission she will have to pay official visits to the ports of foreign powers; she will receive on board many VIPs; she may be called upon to assist in the quelling of a riot ashore; to give aid to the victims of an earthquake, to assist in a rescue at sea or even to make herself seaworthy after an accident or enemy action."

"All this is covered by special drills, practiced during the harbour training week, while the seagoing defects are being rectified."

"It is quite a common occurrence in the Portland base to see some eastern potentate with his retinue, all colourfully clad in long flowing robes, being received on board one of the work-up ships with the gentlemen of the press in attendance."

"In reality the 'foreign' visitors and the 'gentlemen of the press' are officers and ratings from the work-up staff who are testing the ceremonial routine of the ship."

The correspondent continued:

"The advent of the fast submarine has led to the introduction by the Fleet of increasingly complex anti-submarine exercises, and it is in the four weeks' sea programme that the work-up ships are introduced to these new techniques."

"So the sea training commences with graded exercises in anti-submarine warfare, navigation, seamanship and gunnery besides the drills that are required for escort work and those needed for the protection of the ship in the event of conventional and nuclear warfare."

"Finally, in the last weeks of the training, the ship returns to sea for a series of more advanced day and night exercises, culminating in an inspection of the warship under wartime conditions by the Flag Officer Sea Training."

"With this completed, the vessel is ready to take her place in the Fleet."

THURSDAY War, anyone? FOST became an expression known to make the hardest of souls quake in their steaming boots.

The training packages undertaken at Portland by so many ships were renowned for their rigorous high standards.

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Training was not restricted to the RN; such was FOST's reputation that almost every western European navy sent some of its ships to Portland.

Some serials didn't go quite according to plan, of course. In 1958 the 2,000-ton HMS Grenville was warming its engines alongside in Portland when she surged ahead, ramming the 360-ton HMS Shoulton.

And in 1968, the frigate HMS



● Elements of 9 Assault Squadron RM (9 ASRM) train in Zodiacs under the auspices of FOST, carrying out surf drill at Tregantle beach in Whitsand Bay

Picture: PO(Phot) Sean Clee, RN Photographer of the Year x 2

Arethusa inadvertently fired practice shells into the fields of Manor Farm at Galton, scaring two women working there.

It seems entirely appropriate that both ladies were invited on board for a cup of tea and the matter was resolved.

Periods of financial austerity and diminishing defence budgets meant that Portland's future became increasingly insecure.

As early as 1975, considerations were given to closure, not only due to the lack of money but also because of the future introduction of new vehicles and weapon systems requiring greater freedom

of range, height and depth than was available off Portland.

Commercial sea and air traffic were also constraining training activity – there was a threat that oil fields in Lyme Bay would force FOST to relocate.

Preferred options were Plymouth, Rosyth, or the well-established training grounds off Gibraltar, though Milford Haven, Benbecula, Loch Ewe, Invergordon and Campbeltown were also considered, as was a mobile option using the aircraft carrier HMS Triumph, since 1964 a heavy repair ship.

Oil was not discovered in Lyme

Bay in sufficient quantity to threaten OST, so FOST stayed put until July 1995, when budgetary pressures caused FOST to transfer his flag to Plymouth – where sea training continues to this day and to the same exacting standards.

THE period since World War 1 has witnessed huge changes in the demands placed on the Navy.

From peace, to total war and then Cold War; from the world's most powerful navy to severe fiscal limitations; and from independent naval power to reliance on other services and nations, the Navy has

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With thanks to Cdr D Williams, FOST (S) Staff Cdr/Chief of Staff

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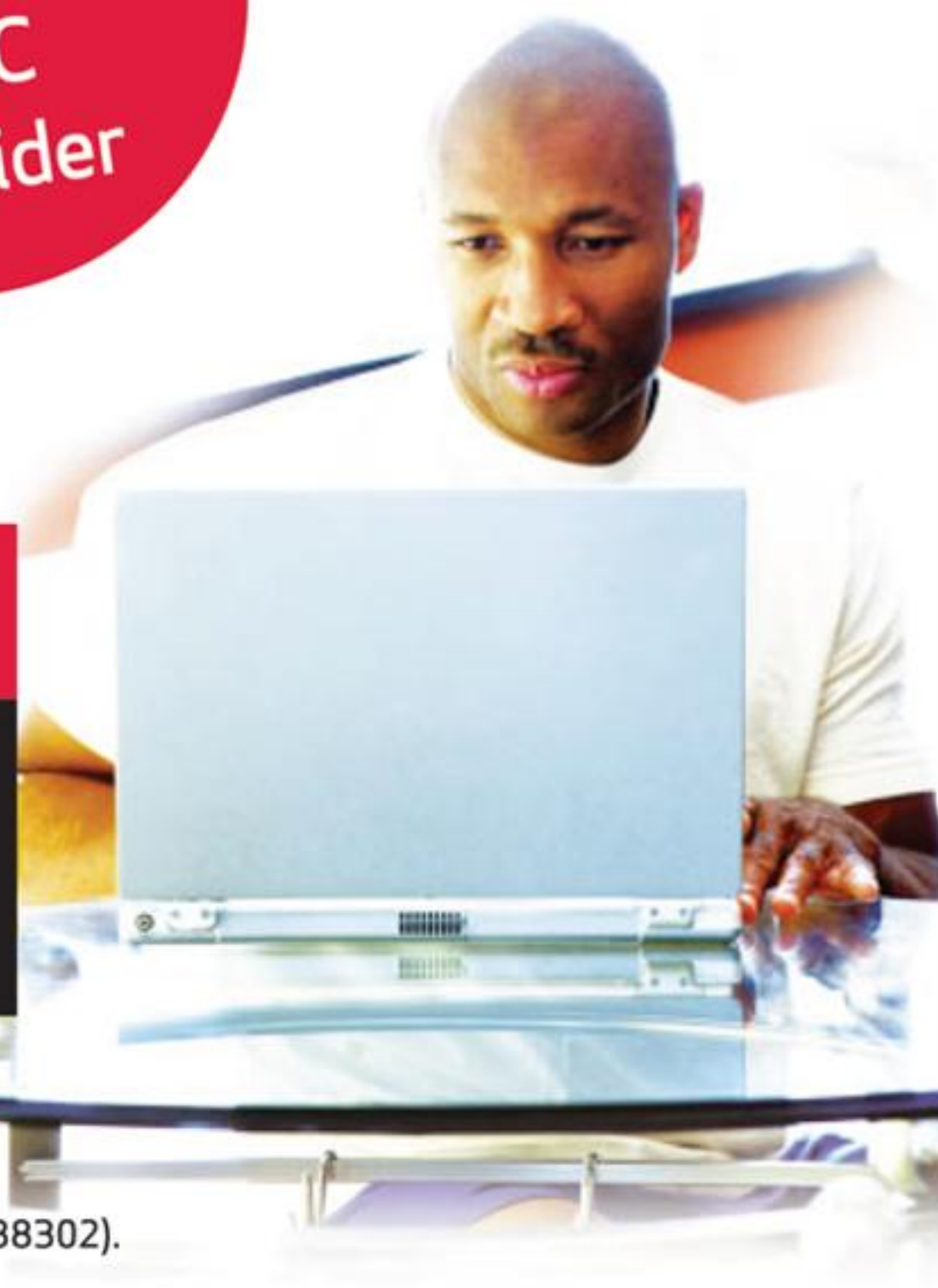
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EDUCATION

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Trinity flies high

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THE SAYING goes that the month of March 'comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb'. Torrential rain around Yeovilton on Tuesday March 3 did not augur well for Trinity School CCF Air Experience Flight Day scheduled for the next day.

It was dark, cold but with a settled cloudless sky when 11 cadets met around 6 am to set forth for RNAS Yeovilton.

Spirits plummeted when the minibus, driven by the OC/RN Section Lt Gérard Poulet, encountered snow on Telegraph Hill which had brought traffic to a snail's pace. Similar conditions prevailed over the Blackdown Hills on the A303.

However on arrival at West Gate, RNAS Yeovilton, the sun was shining brightly as they were greeted by Lt Andy White, a pilot on holdover until he starts his next phase of fast jet training next month.

A quick visit to Temporary Stores soon found each cadet fitted out with flying suit, boots, gloves and safety knife.

Then off to the HQ of 727 NAS to be met by Lt Jerry Tribe. Shown to the students' crew room that would be their home for the day, the cadets and their accompanying staff made themselves a welcome 'wet' (hot drink, tea or coffee to landlubbers) and then assembled in the briefing room for a presentation on the role of 727 NAS and the wider Fleet Air Arm plus the essential safety briefs in preparation for the flights in Grob tutor aircraft.

Then came the excitement of donning the flying clothes and being fitted with a helmet and parachute – more teenage mutant Ninja Turtle look than high street fashion!

The 11 cadets from both RN and Army Sections of Trinity School ranged from Year 10 to Lower 6th and had been selected on their commitment to and enthusiasm for CCF.



For one young 15-year-old, it was to be the experience of a lifetime as Dominic Ellen had never flown before.

The 'man' was Mr Matt Moses, a former pupil and CCF cadet at Trinity, now a member of staff at the school and an Adult Instructor for the past year, in preparation for taking a TA commission and joining the CCF Army staff.

Divided into four groups, each group was then briefed by their respective Pilot Instructors, namely Lt Cdr Steve McArdell, Capt Sam Lucas, Capt Jerry Millward, and Capt Nigel Pitcher; and then the sorties began.

Each cadet was escorted to their Grob and shown the external safety checks before sliding into the trainee's seat in the cockpit, fastening the seat harness and plugging the helmet into the com unit to listen to the Air Traffic Control and their pilot as they taxied on to the runway for take off.

Each flight averaged 40 to 45 minutes and on landing many of the cadets had experienced the thrill of loop the loop and barrel roll aerobatics. Army cadet Cameron Ashton also enjoyed the thrill of a glide landing.

Many cadets had even managed

to control the Grob themselves during flying manoeuvres. Sgt Jack Golpin, a 6th former who co-leads the CCF Army section was described as a 'natural' by his training pilot.

Dominic Ellen alighted from his Grob with an ear-to-ear grin. He said: "It would be a bit like flying to your holiday destination when the pilot asks the passengers if anyone who has never flown before would like to come to the cockpit and help him fly the aircraft; only better because I was with Capt Millward and it was just the two of us, up there above Somerset with the most amazing views".

After the exhilaration of flying, the group toured the Fleet Air Arm Museum and talked to engineers involved in the restoration and reconstruction of one of the only remaining WW2 Fairey Swordfish torpedo/bomber aircraft, originally built in 1941.

The group then visited both the Radar room and the top of the Air Traffic Control tower where they could see at first hand the weather closing in while a group of Lynx helicopters were returning to their base on the other side of the airfield.

After a presentation about

fast jet careers with the FAA, it was time for the course debrief (verdict: "absolutely brilliant") and borrowed kit to be returned to Stores.

Not even heavy snow showers on the long drive back to Teignmouth could diminish the high spirits of AEF06/09 on their way home after such a long exhilarating day.

Many thanks to Lt Jerry Tribe and the pilot instructors of 727 NAS for making it happen.

KELLY College, founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877, is proud of its 130 years of service to the Royal Navy. Kelly, situated in the beautiful south-west of England, offers a co-educational full and weekly boarding, and day education for pupils aged 11-18.

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The Preparatory School is co-educational and has a further 200 pupils aged 2½-11 years. The Prep School shares many of the facilities of the senior school including boarding from Year 5.

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Kelly enjoys an established reputation for good academic results (100 per cent pass rate at A-level for the last six years, with 65 per cent at Grades A + B in 2008) and for its cultural and sporting achievements.

The sporting record of the school is very strong; Kelly has a national reputation in swimming,

rugby and athletics, while hockey and netball teams have achieved county and regional success.

At the same time, Kelly is particularly proud of its music and drama and delighted to be taking advantage of the new Performing Arts Centre.

One of Kelly's strengths is the range and diversity of its societies and activities – from squash to shooting, debating to drawing, sailing to surfing, public speaking to pottery – with dozens to choose from there is something for everyone to enjoy.

The school aims to nurture the academic potential of all pupils. In recent years, every leaver who has wished to proceed to Higher Education has done so.

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Changes to CEA

The King and you

YOU will find something very special at King's.

The school is an extremely successful and ambitious modern co-educational boarding school for 13 to 18 year-olds.

In recent years the school has been particularly successful academically, and was recently rated one of the top three independent schools in the country for value added performance in public examinations.

King's prides itself on providing a genuinely holistic education in what is a wonderfully supportive and friendly community where the Christian ethos is evident for all to see.

The school has a proud record in sports, music and drama – the latter based in the outstanding Fitzjames Theatre, which is rapidly developing into a centre of excellence for the school and wider community.

"Outstanding opportunities for students to succeed," said the Ofsted report 2008.

WITH effect from September 2008 there has been a change to the process for claiming CEA (Board).

All new claims for CEA (Board) must adhere to these new procedures.

The CEA application form has been revised and is now the CEA Eligibility Certificate. This form must be used for all claims with immediate effect.

The form can only be obtained by calling the CEAS office.

■ Maintaining continuity
The aim of Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) is to

assist Service personnel to achieve continuity of education for their children that would otherwise be denied in the maintained day school sector if their children accompanied them on frequent assignments both at home and overseas.

■ Family mobility
Acceptance of accompanied service and hence family mobility is inherent in claiming CEA. An exception to this requirement is those Service personnel classified as Involuntarily Separated (INVOLSEP). Advice on this can be sought from CEAS.

■ First Steps:
Claimants must contact CEAS to obtain the new CEA Eligibility Certificate.

CEAS can offer advice about boarding education and a briefing pack will be sent with a numbered CEA Eligibility Certificate.

The claimant then completes the form including details of their

home addresses for their last four assignments.

The form is returned to CEAS with letter from the chosen school offering the child a place.

■ Establishing eligibility
If the Eligibility Certificate shows the Service person as having remained at the same address for their last four assignments, then CEAS will inform the individual's Commanding Officer who will be required to conduct a review of entitlement.

Further information can be found in DIN 2008DIN01-191: Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) – Change to regulations JSP 752 Ch 9.

If you have any worries about CEA or any other matter regarding the education of your children, please contact CEAS for information and advice: www.ceas.mod.uk, e-mail enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk, helpline 01980 618244.

Strong core at Rookesbury

AT Rookesbury Park School, the head Pippa Harris-Burland is building a school of strengths.

She said: "My vision is for Rookesbury to develop as a strengths-based school, using our environment more effectively, being known for our high academic standards, and challenging our pupils with a stimulating curriculum in a nurturing family environment."

"We encourage the students' awareness of their talents and their strengths potential."

Pippa has implemented an enrichment programme for Years 7 and 8, training the pupils in leadership learning, peer mediation and skills for life.

She is a huge advocate of the well-being of the children; their happiness is her top priority.

"Through such activities as yoga, 'circle time', setting SMART targets and all the sport the children are involved in here, their spiritual well-being has been shown to facilitate better results in the classroom as well as creating a happy and flourishing school."

She believes the happiness of her team of staff and the pupils facilitates a school where high academic standards go hand in hand with the well-being of each child.

"Teachers who are positive and who have high expectations of their pupils achieve far more whilst those who don't, limit their pupils."

She stated: "Learning how to celebrate is vital."

In their Friday celebration assembly parents, staff and children are richly entertained through musical and artistic performances. Rookesbury Park School prides itself on these achievements.

And finally, Pippa agrees with Tal Ben Shahar, from Harvard University, author of *Happiness*.

"As teachers, the questions we ask determine the reality we create."

Academic scholarships are available this September 2009 for entry into Years 7 and 8. Bursaries for all forces families.

For more information please call 01329 833 108, www.rookesburyparkschool.co.uk

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An independent day & boarding school for boys & girls aged 2-18

Recently declared 'outstanding'
for boarding by OFSTED

- ★ Academic excellence
- ★ Continuity
- ★ Firm foundations
- ★ Caring community
- ★ Sport for all
- ★ A chance to perform



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St John's College, Grove Road South, Southsea, Hampshire PO5 3QW



Fees for families claiming the service boarding allowance are set so that for the current year parental contribution is only £1,815.

Open Morning: Thursday 30 April 2009, 9:30am-11am

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co-educational boarding & day school for children from 3 months to 19 years

Forces Bursaries available

where ambitions can thrive



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email: enquiries@trinityschool.co.uk

www.trinityschool.co.uk

RHS meets the Royal Marines

Pupils at the **Royal Hospital School** got down and dirty with Royal Marine Commandos during a Meet the Marines Week held at the School, in Holbrook, Suffolk March 3-6 2009.

The four-day event, led by the 25-strong Royal Marine Commando Display Team, used the school's outstanding facilities including the 96 acres of playing fields and cross-country course, the assault course, large indoor swimming pool, rifle range and nearby Alton Water Reservoir where the School keeps their fleet of 40 dinghies.

Almost 500 14 to 18-year-olds from a variety of schools and colleges across the region, joined the Royal Hospital School pupils.

Some are completing Public Services Courses, designed to prepare them for a career in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines while others, such as those at the Royal Hospital School, are part of the Combined Cadet Force which exists to promote and develop the qualities of responsibility, leadership, self reliance, resourcefulness, endurance and perseverance.

Participants took part in a whole range of activities, including abseiling, wall climbing, and survival instruction, along with other physical challenges aimed at highlighting some of the career opportunities offered by the Royal Navy's elite fighting force.

At the end of each day the Commandos provided a thrilling display by abseiling down the school's iconic clock tower and a demonstration of unarmed combat.

John Snoddon, Head of Ceremonial at the Royal Hospital



School, said: "It was a hugely enjoyable event for the pupils involved, providing physically challenging activities and encouraging young people to stretch themselves."

"Pupils from all over East Anglia joined us here in Holbrook,

and it was a superb opportunity for many of them to achieve more than they ever thought possible.

"It was an honour to host the event on behalf of the Royal Marines and we very much hope that we can offer our facilities again in the future."

CCF flourishes at Wellington School

WELLINGTON School has always been known for its large and active CCF contingent which now has Navy, Army and Air Force sections.

Over 200 students from Year 10 upwards take part in the Friday afternoon CCF activities and the various field days and rarely does a school holiday go by without Wellington School on a CCF camp somewhere in the country or indeed overseas.

The school has long recognised the importance of the CCF for team-building, decision-making and bringing out the very best in its students.

The school also has a large and proficient Corps of Drums which performs at many school and local events around the town of Wellington in Somerset.

Lauren Kerslake, a Year 10 pupil in the RAF section, plays the clarinet in the Corps of Drums and recently she attended a week-long music camp at RAF Cranwell.

As a result, she has been selected from 48 cadets from all over the country to play in the Royal International Air Tattoo later in the year and also in high profile event in London in October which will be attended by Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London.

The week-long course at Cranwell was not just dedicated to band practice.

There was plenty of sport and other activities and of course the opportunity to fly - Lauren was allowed to take the controls of a King Air, the newest training aircraft in the RAF.

Park setting for Hazlegrove

SET in 220 acres of parkland, Hazlegrove prides itself upon offering an affordable education to Service families.

The school offers not only inspiring teaching but a unique boarding community.

Pastoral care is a priority and there is always a full weekend activity programme.

For this reason, boarding numbers continue to grow, bucking national trends.

Sport is very much a strength of the school where pupils learn to win and lose and success

at national level is a regular event.

Over 80 per cent of the children can play one or more musical instruments and every pupil is in a major drama production each year.

At Hazlegrove, children will find many opportunities and challenges, pushing out personal boundaries whilst at the same time learning to work as a team.

"There's something good going on here and it's getting them talked about," wrote the *Good Schools Guide*.

Rookesbury Park School

Co-educational day and boarding 2½-13 years, Wickham



- Balanced curriculum achieving academic excellence
- Sport, music and drama - opportunities for all
- Exceptional rural setting with easy access to M27 J10
- Excellent pupil:staff ratios and superb pastoral care
- After school provision from crèche to casual boarding
- Happy, confident and polite children



T 01329 833108

E secretary@rookesburypark.co.uk

W www.rookesburyparkschool.co.uk

Queen Victoria School is fully funded for tuition and boarding by the Ministry of Defence

Main Intake Point : Primary 7

School Open Day : Mid September 2009



Queen Victoria School is open to the children of all ranks. Applicants must have at least one parent serving in the UK Armed Forces who is Scottish or who has served in Scotland.



For further details and an application form, visit www.qvs.org.uk

A full boarding and day school set in 200 acres of stunning Suffolk countryside, the Royal Hospital School provides exceptional academic and extra-curricular education for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years.


The
Royal Hospital
School



Supporting its established national reputation for musical excellence, the School has recently opened a £3.5m state-of-the-art music school. Every pupil also has the opportunity to enjoy the outstanding sports facilities, including RYA sailing tuition, and to pursue a huge range of interests and activities.

Open Morning
Saturday 9th May 2009 at 9.30am

For further information, visit our website
www.royalhospitalschool.org

Or contact Admissions on 01473 326210
or email admissions@royalhospitalschool.org

The Royal Hospital School, Holbrook
Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 2RX

Discounts available for seafaring families and services families eligible for MOD Continuity of Education Allowance

Academic, Music, Sports
and Sailing Scholarships



Admiral'able St John's

SOUTHSEA-based St John's College has become the first school in the country to host its own Sea Cadet Unit: TS Southsea.

The Unit's official commissioning ceremony took place recently at the school, and was attended by Vice-Admiral Massey, Second Sea Lord and Cdr A Giles, Southern Area Officer for Sea Cadets. Vice Admiral Massey, also a governor of the college, will serve as unit president.

Deputy head Adrian Steele explained: "Initially, the unit will be made up of pupils from St John's College. In time, we will be delighted to open it to children from the local community."

He added: "The College, in partnership with the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, has established this unit to recognise,

very clearly, the great value that belonging to a cadet organisation can have for young people.

"As well as having good fun and making friends, they learn important life skills – such as team work, leadership and problem solving.

"They have the chance to gain various nationally recognised qualifications, such as those offered by the Royal Yachting Association and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme."

St John's College headmaster, Nigel Thorne added: "We're delighted to launch the first Sea Cadet Unit based at a school.

"I am sure that all those who take the first step of enrolling at TS Southsea will gain great experience from the opportunities available."

York expects...

AT THE heart of any good school lie high expectations.

Duke of York is proud that yet again last summer the school's pupils enjoyed success both in their GCSEs and in their applications to universities.

Ninety-four per cent of the GCSE candidates gained the government's benchmark academic figure of five or more GCSE passes including Mathematics and English.

This must be set against an national average of 47 per cent and an average in independent education of 61 per cent. Just about all (97 per cent) of our sixth form leavers went on to university, the vast majority of them (96 per cent) being accepted at their university and course of first choice.

This year is a very important year for the Duke of York's as it is celebrates the centenary of the school's move to Dover from Chelsea.

The school was originally founded in 1801 to take the sons and daughters of soldiers who had died fighting for their country in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

The school moved to Dover

in 1909 to escape the pollution of the city and it has continued to thrive.

In 1994 girls were re-invited to join the school and it is now a full boarding school for children whose parents are serving in the British Armed Forces.

It is fully funded by the Ministry of Defence so those who are serving pay far less termly (currently £550) than state boarding or independent schools.

The children can look forward to many special events to celebrate the Centenary move to Dover.

The school marching band was again invited to play at the Army Rugby Championships in Aldershot in March and can look forward to playing again at Lords for the cricket match England vs West Indies in May.

The Centenary launch took place in February hosted by illustrious Old Boy the Lord Bishop of Liverpool in the House of Lords.

A special Centennial Parade will also take place through the streets of Dover in June.

The Centenary year also marks the start of the first stage of a multi million upgrade of the school's boarding facilities.

Military history at Queen Victoria

QUEEN Victoria School is unique in Scotland. It can trace its history back to the turn of the last century when the idea was first mooted of a school to commemorate those Scottish soldiers and sailors who fell in South Africa during the Boer Wars.

It is still run by the Ministry of Defence and provides top quality education for the children of soldiers, sailors, and airmen and women who are from or have served in Scotland.

The children at the school are aged between 10.5/11 and 18 (P7 to S6), the main intake being at Primary 7.

The school offers its pupils a wide and balanced curriculum following the Scottish educational system and includes courses at Standard, Intermediate 2 and Higher Grades of the Scottish Certificate of Education.

Pupils also have the opportunity to study in a number of subjects for the Advanced Higher examinations.

Increasingly, pupils move on to Higher and Further Education but career links with the Services remain strong.

Pastoral care is given a very high priority along with careers guidance and personal and social education.

Queen Victoria School aims to provide a stable 'home from home' environment, promote the welfare and happiness of each individual child and develop their self-esteem.

In addition, there is a very full programme of sporting, cultural and spiritual development.

Queen Victoria School is a unique boarding school which seeks to achieve the best that is possible for its pupils.

The school prides itself on developing the pupils in the widest possible sense and aims to achieve success academically, in sport, music, drama and many other extra-curricular areas.

A very special and unique dimension of Queen Victoria School is the ceremonial side which preserves the very best of the School's traditions.

In 2008 the world renowned Pipe-band performed throughout the Edinburgh Tattoo and have been invited to perform at Basel, Switzerland this summer.

This is an outstanding school.

- A voluntary aided, mixed 13-18 Grammar School
- No tuition costs. Boarding fees £2,860 per term
- 65% A/B grades at A level. 95% of students go on to University
- Performing Arts Centre, Sixth Form Centre
- 400 seat theatre, sports hall, astroturf and technology centre
- Weekend programmes with a wide range of outdoor pursuits
- Art, design, music and drama thrive
- 75 acres of grounds

Contact the Registrar at:

Cranbrook School, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 3JD

Tel: 01580 711804 Fax: 01580 711828

E-mail: registrar@cranbrook.kent.sch.uk

www.cranbrookschool.co.uk

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Chilton Cantelo School

Chilton Cantelo, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 8BG

"Boarding at Chilton is always cosy and welcoming" Yr 5 boarder

"It's comforting to know that your money is spent so wisely" Yr 9 parent

Chilton is a unique school for boys and girls aged 7-16 both boarding and day. In this idyllic, safe setting with a strong sense of community and a care and concern for every individual, children develop into the best possible versions of themselves. You would be hard pressed to find a school that offers better value for money.

Fees from £2,360 per term

"Best English Independent School for GCSE Science(VQ) and for PE 2007" - Good Schools Guide



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Wholly West Hill

WEST Hill Park offers an holistic education. Situated within forty acres of Hampshire countryside, West Hill offers its boys and girls a complete all round education, producing mature, confident but caring individuals.

As well as an extensive academic curriculum the school makes good use of its extensive grounds with a full sporting calendar, and fixtures both home and away.

The school also has a riding school with its own floodlit outdoor arena.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities takes place after school including fencing, street dance, ballet, music, sports, speech and drama, friendship bracelets, making soft toys, modelling and films.

West Hill Park children are encouraged to think independently and consider the needs of others.

Why not go and see what West Hill can offer your children?

Please contact the Registrar on 01329 842356 who will be pleased to arrange a tour.



Where there is space to grow, space to learn
and space to simply be ...

Nursery 2½ - 4 Pre-Prep 4 - 7 Prep 7 - 13

Co-educational day and boarding school
Excellent facilities
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Country life at Shebbear

TO MANY people a boarding school in the English countryside conjures up scenes of a bygone age: misty, dewy mornings, a place where the air is healthy and good for you, where children can climb trees, camp out and do the things that you read about in the Enid Blyton books.

Shebbear College strives to have the best of the old but add to it the very best of the present.

Many parents feel that the essence of boarding in the United Kingdom is best captured in a rural setting. The natural elements of peace and quiet, fresh air and space to play are combined with modern facilities housed in historic buildings.

Modern boarding houses offer comfortable 'home from home' facilities and a stable environment where changing family situations and relationships do not disturb a child's equilibrium.

A country setting provides an environment where children can be children.

Equally important are the members of staff that dedicate their time to help growing children.

Shielded from the dangers of city streets, pupils experience personal safety – a highly desirable pre-requisite to learning.

The pressures of city schools to adopt more 'sophisticated' lifestyles are to some degree, held at bay. Similarly, the drug culture that dominates so often in urban society is diminished by a rural location and the bounds of a residential campus.

Removed from the hurly-burly

of the metropolis, the pupils keep in touch with what goes on through e-mail and internet provision. This rapid communication system allows the best of both worlds.

Thanks to the internet, there is no sense of the isolation that used to prevail in country schools.

Technology allows frequent communication with home and parents can feel reassured that, in an increasingly hostile world, their children are in a safe, secure environment.

Chilton cheer

Chilton Cantelo School is set in 20 acres of beautiful countryside only five miles from Yeovil and Sherborne.

Central to the school's ethos is highlighting and attempting to meet the individual needs of each pupil.

At Chilton, the school fits the child, so that they leave well-rounded, interesting young people who possess the academic credentials and confidence to meet the challenges of the modern world.

Chilton is a unique school that offers exceptional value for money.

Fees start from £2,360 per term with no additional charges for meals, books or extra tuition.

Telephone 01935 850555 or email: info@chiltoncanteloschool.co.uk for an appointment to view the school which will be delighted to show you around.

THE DUKE OF YORK'S ROYAL MILITARY SCHOOL



'More than a school to me'

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OPENING MINDS...



Wellington School

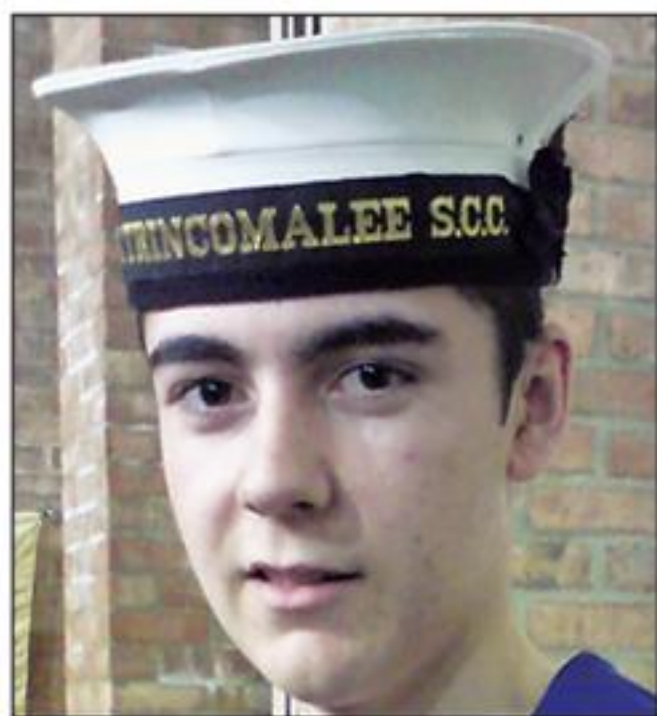
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Wellington
SOMERSET

www.wellington-school.org.uk



● POC Leon Usher

Double honour for Leon

PETTY Officer Cadet Leon Usher has been chosen as both a Lord Lieutenant's Cadet and Naval Board Cadet for 2009.

To get one of these is a great achievement, so for the Hartlepool unit cadet to bag both is a real coup – though his CO declared him an “excellent example” to other youngsters.

Only six Naval Board Cadets are selected each year from the Corps in recognition of the outstanding example they have each set in their area.

Throughout their year of office they will accompany members of the Navy Board and other high-ranking members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines at official ceremonial occasions, and will brief senior officers on issues of importance to the Corps.

The Lord Lieutenant of County Durham is the Queen's personal representative in the county, whose duties include receiving royal visitors to the county and representing the Queen at particular ceremonies, and the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet assists in these duties.

CPO (SCC) Stephen Harvey, CO of TS Trincomalee, said: “Leon sets extremely high standards, not only for himself but also for others to follow.”

“He is an excellent example to all the young people in the unit, and we are all very proud of him.”

Cream of the crop

BOLLINGTON and Macclesfield unit's juniors are a good crop of youngsters.

And to prove it they can boast the Peter Gravestock trophy, recognising them as the top junior unit in the North-West.

The trophy – a carved wooden dolphin and her calf – was presented by Peter's widow, Lt Cdr Denise Gravestock, who was the Senior Staff Officer North West until her retirement.

PO Valerie Thickett, Officer in Charge Junior Division at TS Ardent, said the award reflected the hard work and dedication of all the staff in helping to make the Junior Division as successful and respected as it is.

The junior sections of units cater for children aged between ten and twelve.



● Members of the League of Venturers Search and Rescue organisation gather round a model of HMS Hood at the battlecruiser's annual memorial service at Boldre, in the New Forest. The Venturers' Executive Officer, Cdre Philip Pearce-Smith, said his group, aged between 12 and 21, is a breeding ground for RN and RFA staff as “after five years training I lose my best cadets at a time when they are becoming useful.” He added that one member is about to join Dartmouth while several others are already afloat. The group's aim is to help people or animals in danger or distress on land or sea.

Raleigh rallies round for stranded guests

TEN Sea Cadets from Norwich, Beccles and Bury St Edmunds little realised that they would be taking on the elements when they travelled to HMS Raleigh to attend a level 2 Seamanship course.

Leaving Norwich at 0700 on a drizzly, damp and cold Sunday morning, they stopped only to pick up the three cadets from Bury St Edmunds before the long trek to Cornwall.

Arriving at 1600 – just in time for a very welcome evening meal – they soon unwound with a little ping pong, pool and TV.

The week passed quickly as they learnt new skills in seamanship.

Almost before they realised it Friday had dawned, and it was time to leave – but things didn't quite go to plan.

Snow arrived with a vengeance causing most of the UK to grind to a halt, and the decision was made to remain in HMS Raleigh for another 24 hours.

Phone calls were made to families, SCC HQ extended the hire time of the minibus, and Raleigh SCC staff pulled out all the stops to organise meals and sleeping gear.

Then it was realised that they had a rare opportunity to witness the passing-out parade of the senior class of HMS Raleigh trainees.



● PO Lee 'Fred' Perry with some of the East Anglian cadets who were stranded at HMS Raleigh by heavy falls of snow

PO Lee 'Fred' Perry, the Senior Drill Instructor at Raleigh, ensured that they had a good view of the parade, which was held inside one of the drill sheds because of the weather.

PO Perry is also a Sea Cadet Instructor over the River Tamar in Plymouth.

The following morning the weather was still very cold, but there was news that the roads were

open, so the decision was made to head for home – much to the disgust of the cadets.

The minibus was loaded again and sea-time clocked up on the crossing between Devon and Cornwall on the Torpoint Ferry.

As they neared Exeter it was apparent how bad the roads were, with the motorway blocked except for a small part of a single lane.

The snow stayed with them as

they crossed most of the South of England, but the thaw had set in as the sun struggled through heavy grey clouds.

The party arrived in Norwich at 1700 – just as football crowds were leaving the Norwich City's Carrow Road ground, which slowed progress to a crawl for the last half-mile to where Mums and Dads were waiting to take them home.

108 and still going strong

THE Portsmouth Royal Marine Volunteer Cadet Corps (RMVCC) celebrated its 108th birthday with a parade on Valentine's Day.

More than 100 cadets in full blues paraded the unit's Colours and were inspected by Lt Cdr Alan Cronin at HMS Excellent.

And even at 108 the unit is still looking to develop – 30 new recruits have just been taken on, and there are plans to gain another 30 in the coming months.

Soon after the unit was also inspected by Lord Mayor of Portsmouth Cllr Richard Jensen – a former member of the RMVCC.

The Lord Mayor watched the training activities and spoke to cadets and staff before addressing the whole unit, praising them for their standards and thanking them for providing one of the Lord Mayor's Cadets, CSM Young.

The unit also managed to impress in the pool by taking the honours at the Portsmouth Area VCC swimming competition, hosted by HMS Collingwood.

Potential recruits should contact the unit on 023 9254 7495.

George keen on Kenya

A CADET from Weston-super-Mare unit is heading out on a humanitarian mission before he joins the Senior Service in the autumn.

And 17-year-old POC George Davis is now seeking sponsorship to help him reach his goal.

George, who is expecting to enter the Navy in September, spotted an advert for the Kenya Aid Mission in a local paper in January, and felt it would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“There are many different things I could do to help them, such as the construction of a resource centre, which is the main objective,” said George.

“This resource centre will



● POC Harriett O'Neil



● LC Rebecca Callan



● POC Matthew Dare Edwards

Three into two does go

CARDIFF unit is getting used to having high-profile cadets within its ranks as three youngsters are connected with two ceremonial posts.

POC Harriett O'Neil has just finished a busy and successful year as the South Glamorgan Lord Lieutenant's Cadet, supporting Capt Sir Norman Lloyd-Evans in his extensive range of duties.

Harriett has handed over to her shipmate LC Rebecca Callan, who has been chosen for the same position in 2009.

And completing the honours is POC Matthew Dare Edwards, who has been chosen as Mid Glamorgan Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for the coming year.

All three recently attended the investiture of the High Sheriff of Glamorgan.

Stony response

A DOZEN new entry sailors from HMS President travelled to TS Wild Goose in Kettering to help the regional Sea Cadet sailing unit upgrade its facilities.

Around seven tonnes of pebbles were raked, shovelled and dug in to create a new parking area for the unit's many small vessels.

Lt (SCC) Neil Hartwell said: “I am very happy to have the help of our colleagues in the RNR – without this we would have struggled to get this work done in time.”

include a library which we will fill, a few school rooms, adult training rooms and a few rooms for the homeless to stay in.

“Another option that I'm hoping to do is to work alongside a school in Kenya and teach them about England and English life skills.”

George has been learning to pay his own way in life – he has two jobs, at a local corner shop and McDonald's – to avoid depending on the help of others, but on this occasion he needs £900 to cover the cost of the trip, which will last for a fortnight in June.

If anyone can help, please contact George at clever_george@hotmail.com

Andy's efforts are rewarded

A SEA Cadet officer who breathed new life into a fading unit has been rewarded for his efforts.

Lt Andy Searles, CO of Henley unit, has been awarded the Roddie Casement Sword, given annually to the CO from among more than 400 in the UK who is considered

to have made the biggest contribution to the objectives of the Corps.

In the award citation Lt Searles was praised for having revitalised the fortunes of a flagging unit that had just six cadets when he became its CO in 2005.

Since then its complement has grown to 35 and the cadets have been successful in national sailing and pulling boat competitions.

The riverside unit has also become a RYA Training Centre and is regularly praised for its above-average standards.

In his nomination, Southern Area Officer Cdr Andy Giles praised the high standards that Lt Searles sets for himself and his staff.

He pointed out that the cadets at Henley are always immaculately turned out, well disciplined, polite and extremely well motivated.

The sword was passed to the SCC by the family of the late Capt Roddie Casement, Captain of the Corps from 1959 to 1967.

On every occasion since then the sword has been presented by Capt Roddie Casement's son, Cdr Michael Casement RN (Retd).

Lt Searles said: “I am very proud, especially as we were competing against more than 400 units across the country.”

“This is only the third time that the sword has been awarded to a unit in the south in more than 20 years.”

“It is not just down to me though. I would like to thank everyone in the unit for helping to bring this about.”

Buxton staff win praise at review

BUXTON unit has received a glowing report from someone who should know.

The Royal Navy's Area Officer described Buxton as one of the best in the North West, praising the Commanding Officer and unit staff for their "unstinting efforts and dedication."

Lt Col Wotherspoon commended the level of support from unit chairman Howard Schofield and the active unit management committee.

The result was a burgee, the second year in succession for TS Bulwark.

Severe weather caused the cancellation of the unit's Royal Naval parade, but guests will be invited to another function in the near future when cadets will be able to demonstrate their skills.

Buxton unit would welcome youngsters aged between ten and 18 who relish a challenge with a nautical theme – and a little more help from adult volunteers would also be of great value.

Contact CO Lt (SCC) Bruce Luckman RNR on 01298 78092 for more details.

Hartlepool students were best

LAST autumn a group of 24 cadets and five staff from Hartlepool unit attended a national course at HMS Raleigh.

While there they were assisted on such skills as drill, uniform dress, behaviour, and participation in various activities such as firefighting, an assault course and a damage control repair exercise.

At the end of a rewarding and busy week TS Trincomalee led the overall standings.

And there they stayed.

As a consequence, at the end of February the Hartlepool cadets and staff were awarded the Vigilant trophy for being the best unit on the course at Raleigh in 2008.

The trophy was presented by Deputy Area Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Alan Stewart RNR to POC Leon Usher on behalf of the unit.

● Leon's double – see page 45

Worcester trophy keeps memory alive

WORCESTER unit was honoured to welcome Pauline Lane, the daughter of the late John Hewlett, to TS Worcester to present the new John Hewlett Marine Engineering Trophy.

The trophy was made by cadets and staff at the unit in recognition of John Hewlett, who had been a leading member of the Royal British Legion in Worcester since 1947.

John Hewlett died last year at the age of 92, only hours after being presented with his MBE.

John (or Jack, as he was known to his friends) was born in Worcester in 1915 and joined the Royal Navy at the age of 26, serving as a Chief Petty Officer on HMS Chaser.

With the Navy he went to Gibraltar, Aden, Bombay, Colombo and Australia, and while serving as a repair squad Chief in the southern seas he saw first-hand the damage caused by Japanese suicide bombers.

After inspecting the Guard of honour and presenting the trophy to the winning marine engineering team (Philip Coventry, Jack Goodwin and Jake Hicks), Pauline sat with cadets and staff and went through her father's photo album, telling them about his life.

Laptops for St Helens

ST HELENS unit has been presented with two laptop computers, thanks to United Utilities.

John Neal, United Utilities' Information Systems Manager, handed over the machines at the TS Scimitar headquarters in Mill Street on behalf of Phillip Green, United's Chief Executive Officer.

CPO Ian Jones, the unit's Officer-in-Charge, accepted the laptops and thanked United for their generosity.

The computers will be used in conjunction with projectors which had already been donated by the President of the local Rotary Club.

She told them on one afternoon he was working on the side of a damaged ship when an attacking Japanese fighter plane sprayed them with bullets.

Jack and his work party dived in the sea for cover, only to be told by the captain of the ship they were in more danger in the water from the sharks than from the bullets. They left the water quickly.

Pauline also presented the unit with the Battle Ensign flown on HMS Chaser when her father served in her.

Worcester CO S/Lt (SCC) Rob Mountford RNR said: "It has been our pleasure to have Pauline on board and see her present the John Hewlett Marine Engineering trophy.

"This trophy will be awarded

each year, and the name of John Hewlett will not be forgotten."

The unit is based next to the River Severn in Diglis off Portland Walk, where the Worcester and Birmingham Canal joins the river.

Parade nights are Monday and Friday, from 1915 until 2130.

See the website at <http://units.ms-sc.org/worcester/Default> for more details.



● Best foot (and arm) forward: cadets from Stevenage unit undertake parade training at HMS Collingwood in Fareham

Mayor joins training party

THE Mayor of Stevenage accompanied cadets and staff from TS Andromeda on a visit to training establishment HMS Collingwood.

Aimed at giving the Stevenage cadets a glimpse of life in the Navy, the visiting youngsters were soon being put through their paces – literally – when they undertook a forenoon of parade training.

Other items on the agenda included a visit to the Royal Marines School of Music in Portsmouth Naval

Base, the Historic Dockyard and the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, just across the harbour mouth in Gosport.

Mayor Cllr Michael Patston said: "TS Andromeda is one of the many projects that I support and promote.

"The lads seemed to be really enjoying their trip to Portsmouth and surrounding areas, and HMS Collingwood looked after us really well."



● Lt Cdr Frank Pugh with his replica sword

Thanks to Frank for six decades

ELLESMERE Port has marked six decades of service to the Corps by one of its former COs.

A fundraising cocktail party was the setting for the presentation of three replica swords from the Battle of Trafalgar to Lt Cdr Frank Pugh.

In his 60 years with the Corps, Lt Cdr Pugh has been CO of Ellesmere Port twice, Birkenhead unit, and has been Assistant District Officer and District Officer for Wirral.

Replica swords were made by Derek Bone, chairman of TS Forward, the Ellesmere Port unit.

Bigger is better at Navy News...

WITH (hopefully) better weather on the way, and a flurry of activity after the long winter, perhaps now is a good time to restate a few simple rules which will help us report on your activities.

✉ Email is probably the best means of getting stories to us, though hand-written notes (if we can decipher the writing) and prints can still be accepted.

✉ Reports should be concise, with names and ranks in full.

✉ Do not embed digital pictures into documents – keep them as separate files; most people submit Word documents and jpegs.

✉ We prefer pictures of activities rather than people standing in lines, large groups or the backs of heads. If cadets have been sailing, let's see them sailing.

✉ Sharp, colourful pictures will always attract the eye more than gloomy ones full of dark uniforms. You would be amazed at the number of murky, fuzzy shots of backs of heads we get at Navy News.

✉ Picture files should be as large as possible; as a rule of thumb if it's smaller than a megabyte it will look terrible in print and we try to avoid such images.

✉ A picture without a caption is almost useless – again, full names and ranks, please.

Electronic submissions should be sent to edit@navynews.co.uk, or in writing to Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH.

Family service

CHIEF Petty Officer Sarah Abbott, of Newhaven and Seaford unit, has been presented with her Long Service medal by Cllr Bob Lacey, Chairman of East Sussex County Council.

And the tradition of service to TS Defiance has now been taken up by another generation – CPO Abbott's daughter Chelsea has joined the unit as a junior cadet.

All hail the best of Beccles

BECCLES unit has held its annual awards evening to reward success and provide a platform for the youngsters to demonstrate their talents.

With a good many district staff and local dignitaries in the audience, as well as parents and friends, the evening started with the Colours ceremony, during which TS Brave paraded a guard.

Following the opening ceremonies all of the unit's cadets were inspected.

The highlight for many was the presentation of awards, including:

Junior Endeavour: Jnr 1 Ruffy; **Best Dressed Junior:** Jnr1 Thompson; **Best Junior winner:** Cdt G Shaw; **Best Junior runner-up:** Cdt Langridge; **Senior Endeavour:** OC Gibbs;

Best Division: Mohawk; **Best Dressed Male:** AC S Shaw; **Best Dressed Female:** AC M Williams; **Fundraiser of the Year:** AC Simon Spillings; **Best New Entry:** Cdt Buchanan; **Best Junior Cadet:** Cdt Bacon; **Best Senior Cadet:** ACM Williams; **Special Award:** AC Sawdon (CVQO); **Cadet of the Year winner:** AC S Shaw; **Cadet of the Year runner-up:** OC Stanley.

Once the presentations were over the cadets entertained their guests with a drum display, a guard display and a demonstration by the piping team.

The event ended with Evening Colours.

Beccles parades on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at their HQ in Fen Lane – for more details call 01502 711858.



● LC Davinia Liste (left) and PPO Amy Barton, of Hitchin unit, with framed mementoes of their time on board the sailing ship TS Royalist. Next time they go on board the brig they will be watch officers

Top men gather

THE tug of heartstrings and links to the past were evident at Walton-on-the-Naze unit's annual Valentine dinner and disco.

The event has been part of the unit's calendar for decades – this was the 41st staging – and despite economic uncertainties the dinner still managed to attract more than 140 people.

Guest of honour Cdr Paul Haines, RN London Area Officer, noted in his speech that the event was somewhat special in that all the unit's COs past and present were present, with 36 years of command between them.

The four top men are Lt Cdr (SCC) Alan Rainbird RNR (TS Diana 1973-84), Lt Cdr (SCC) John Fletcher RNR (TS Diana and TS Illustrious 1984-91), Lt Cdr (SCC) John Garrett RNR (TS Illustrious 1991-2005) and S/Lt (SCC) Gary Dodd RNR (TS Illustrious 2006 to present).

Cdr Haines later presented S/Lt Dodd with the Stephenson Trophy and Burgee for 2008, the Cadet Forces Medal to the unit's First Lieutenant, CPO Ian Richards, and a certificate to London Area Navy Board Cadet POC Jay Watcham.



● Four COs and an Area Officer: from left, Lt Cdr Alan Rainbird, S/Lt Gary Dodd, Cdr Paul Haines, Lt Cdr John Garrett and Lt Cdr John Fletcher at the Walton-on-the-Naze Valentine dinner

Eleventh hour plea answered

A LAST-minute plea for help was answered by the cadets of **TS Broadsword** – and the youngsters ended up being seen by some half a million people.

The Sea Training Corps unit had closed for Christmas when the CO had a call from the local mayor asking if they could step into the breach.

The borough of Barnet had been let down at the eleventh hour, and someone was needed to represent the borough in the New Year's Day parade in London.

With most cadets on holiday the CO had his doubts but put out an alert, and on the day 27 youngsters turned up at HQ.

A band, colours and escort party were quickly organised and they joined the parade, not realising they were also being judged.

So it came as something of a surprise when the unit was judged tenth out of 23 boroughs, gaining £1,000 for their Mayor's Appeal (Cancer and Carers), while four junior cadets collected a further £130 in buckets along the route.

Two familiar faces who were on leave from the Navy were AB Stefano Laurenza and AB Lily O'Gorman, two of the three Broadsword cadets to have joined the Services in the past year.

Lily made a point of contacting unit CO Cdr Gerald Beck RNR (Retd) to say how much her cadet training had helped – she gained a 100 per cent pass in her RN Seamanship exam and took four of the five awards presented at the passing-out parade.

Efficient – 27 times in a row

THREE presentations formed the centrepiece of the Stonehaven unit Royal Navy parade.

First into the spotlight was LC Nicola MacDonald, who was given her Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Second was a special award made to Russell Adams for all his help over the past decade in preparing cadets for the special evolutions they have to present on inspection evening.

Russell has also been instrumental in writing the sketches and scripts which have gone down a storm over the years.

Finally, the Stonehaven Lions Club presented £1,500 to the Area Officer (North), Cdr Colin Redstone, who accepted the donation on behalf of the unit – the money will go into the replacement safety boat fund.

Following the completion of the evening's formal programme, Cdr Redstone told those gathered that the unit was to be awarded the prestigious Burgee – the highest award for efficiency in the Corps – for 2009.

That makes it 27 years in a row for TS Carron, a fact of which the unit is extremely proud.

Evesham donation

EVESHAM unit's Royal Navy parade also allowed the youngsters to hand over some hard-earned cash to a military charity.

The business end of the event saw Cdr Josh Binns, of the South West Area Office, cast a critical eye over the unit, watched by officer-in-charge PO Ian Bostock and a large turn-out of supporters.

During the proceedings a cheque for £527 was handed to Maj Ian Baldry, a serving member of the Territorial Army who co-ordinates fundraising for Help for Heroes.

Maj Baldry thanked the cadets for their efforts, and gave a short briefing to all in attendance on the work of the charity.



● A special delivery by Taurus 09 flagship HMS Bulwark in Valletta's Grand Harbour will give youngsters in Malta a chance to try their hand at sailing. Amongst the Land Rovers, amphibious vehicles and raiding craft on the assault ship's vehicle deck were two Bosun sailing dinghies addressed to the **Malta GC** unit. Previously used by the RN sailing centre in Portland, and then loaned to **Weymouth** unit, the boats will now be used to nurture an interest in all things nautical. "Bulwark is pleased to be able to make this contribution," said Lt Dave Gooding, Bulwark's Sea Cadet Affiliations Officer. "Investments like yachts and dinghies can be a very tall order for Sea Cadet units who have so many other things to worry about, so it's been great that the Royal Navy has been able to step in and lend a hand". The dinghies were received by Lt Jonathon Zahara-Davis RNR, CO of TS St Paul, accompanied by the local RM Cadets and their OC Lt Donald Montebello RMR. During their four-day visit to the island task group ships welcomed cadets and instructors on board

Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow

They know the drill

UNITS from across West Kent District held their annual Drill and Piping competition at the Royal School of Military Engineering in Brompton.

More than 200 cadets and adult volunteers came together on one of the UK's oldest and most prestigious parade grounds to test their ability in ceremonial skills, which included marching, weapons drill, discipline, teamwork and the traditional skill of piping signals with a bosun's call.

Eight units – Sheppey, Medway Towns, Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Westerham, Dartford and Gravesend, and including for the first time in many years Chatham Marine Cadets – took part in the day, with honours evenly shared.

The winners were:

- Armed Drill: Tunbridge Wells,
- Unarmed Drill: Dartford,
- Colour Party: Chatham Marine Cadets,
- Team Piping: Sheppey,
- Endeavour Trophy: Medway Towns,
- Individual Piping: POC Firth (Sheppey),
- Best Guard Commander: AC A Heald (Tunbridge Wells),
- Best Squad Commander: POC C Bennett (Dartford).

District Ceremonial Training Officer and event organiser CPO (SCC) James Groves said: "The event was made possible through the kindness of the Royal Engineers, allowing the Sea Cadets to use their historic parade ground and facilities for the day.

"It provides the young people with an opportunity not many youngsters will experience.

"The venue and the day have been a resounding success, enabling us to display some of our core values of teamwork, self discipline and self confidence which underpin



● Sheppey Cadets prepare to take to the parade ground; a Petty Officer Cadet adds the finishing touches to a Cadet's boots

much of what we are trying to achieve – good citizenship."

The trophies, medals and certificates were presented by District President Lt Cdr (SCC)

Dave Brown RNR (Rtd) and Regimental Sergeant Major (RSME1) Steve Lomas.

A special presentation was also made by RSM Lomas to Lt (SCC)

Brian Moore of a clasp to his Cadet Forces Medal, recognising his long service and commitment to the Sea Cadets and the young people of Kent.

New recruit can't stand the heat

WHEN snow brought much of the country to a standstill, Northampton and Wellingborough cadets proved they are made of sterner stuff.

Not only did they get in for drill night, but they also had a hand in the appearance of a new recruit (left), though once things warmed up the new boy made himself scarce.

The parent unit (TS Laforey) and its

Wellingborough satellite TS Diamond, based in Rushden, have been busy maintaining their high standards, as demonstrated by their victory in the regional ceremonial drill and piping competition – their sixth in a row.

As well as winning the Armed Guard event the unit also won Best Guard Commander category, with POC Jack Mitchell taking the award for the third

successive year.

Meanwhile, 14-year-old AC Harry Boyde won the piping competition.

The competition took place during the same week as the unit's annual Royal Naval review, when Cdr James Hayward, CO of RNR unit HMS Forward, inspected the cadets, and presented awards, including the 2008 Stephenson Trophy.

Come join the band – even if you can't play...

CADETS travelled from across the north of England to attend a band course at Altcar Training Camp.

More than 90 youngsters took up the opportunity to train as part of a massed band – and 30 of which had never played an instrument in their lives.

During the week the training team, consisting of bandmasters and band staff from a number of units along with Drum Major Brown, RM Band Scotland, had the chance to work with the cadets in their sections and individually on their instruments.

Some of the cadets also tried other instruments during the week, but all gave 100 per cent to the course which was evident in the performance they gave on the final day.

The grand finale took the form of a 20-minute Beat Retreat display in front of the High Sheriff of Merseyside, Capt Robin Woodall former captain of the QE2, and a number of other VIPs – and the whole event was created from scratch with just three days of training.

It wasn't all work, work, work – the cadets had some down time through the week, and enjoyed a disco on the last night.

The group also had the pleasure of the presence of the Royal Navy recruiting team, who attended for the whole week and gave the cadets an insight into a career in the Senior Service.

Presentations given during the course included the following:

- Most Improved Musician: Beverley Mearns (Bebington),
- Best Musician: Colin Greaves (Stockport),
- Most Improved Percussionist: Alan Campbell (Huyton),
- Best Percussionist: Kristain Wall (Ellesmere Port),
- Best New Bandie: Charlie Tobin (Runcorn),
- Best New Bandie: Rebekah Hughes (Liverpool City).

Rye smiles after day in Trumpeter

RYE unit went to action stations when ten cadets went onboard the Royal Naval patrol vessel HMS Trumpeter for the day.

The P2000 or Archer-class training ship is 20 metres long, capable of 18 knots and has accommodation for 12 crew and trainees on board.

The cadets left Rye at 0630 in the morning for their journey to Portsmouth Naval Base.

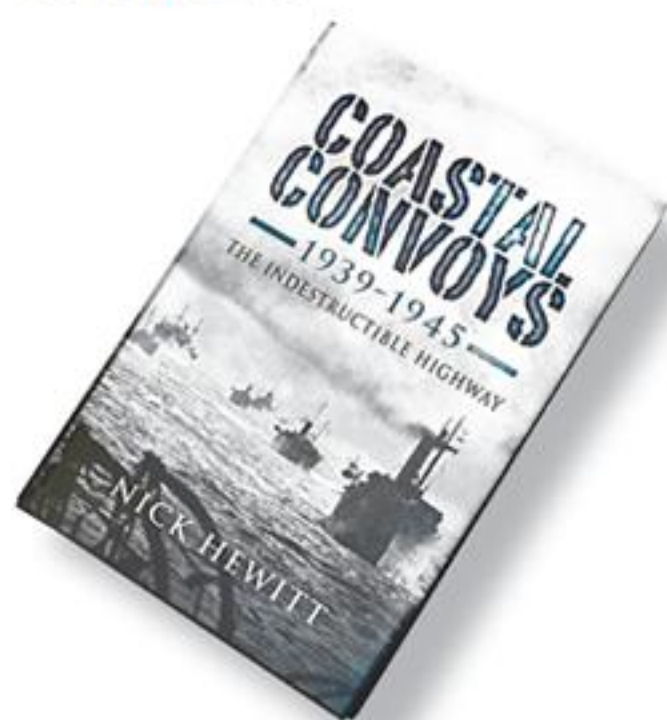
On arrival at the ship, the cadets were given a safety briefing and tour of the vessel before commencing their training in Portsmouth Harbour and the Solent.

Training included the opportunity for cadets to put to good use what they have already learnt within the Corps including chartwork and navigation.

They were also given hands-on training on bearings and anchoring.

After a full day of training, the cadets returned to Rye having thoroughly enjoyed themselves – and the party expressed their thanks to the CO of Trumpeter, Lt Will King, and his crew.





Command of the coast

WATCH any documentary of the Battle of Britain and there's a pretty good chance you'll hear the voice of one Charles Gardner.

Gardner was a sports reporter – it perhaps explains his rather excited and slightly insensitive tone – sent by the Beeb to report on a clash between the RAF and Luftwaffe off Dover one July day in 1940.

And he did. "Oh boy, I've never seen anything so good as this – the RAF fighters have really got these boys taped."

Gardner also proclaimed that a convoy – the Luftwaffe's target – had not been hit.

In fact, CW6 suffered one ship sunk and two damaged – a fairly typical rate of attrition as Nick Hewitt shows in *Coastal Convoys: The Indestructible Highway* (Pen & Sword, £19.99 ISBN 978-1-84415-8164), a much-needed plug in a gap of WW2 naval history.

Coastal Convoys is overflowing with first-hand accounts of this long-neglected campaign, almost all of them from archives rather than previously-printed works.

Ships in coastal waters moved everything – coal to London's power stations, the landing craft and segments of Mulberry Harbour for the Normandy invasion – and yet their contribution to victory "slipped through the net of History" lamented Telegraphist Jack Yeatman of the RN Patrol Service trawler Pearl.

In all, more than 1,400 ships were lost in UK coastal waters (there were in excess of 130,000 voyages made between 1939 and 1945). Dover was hellfire corner. One in every five convoys passing through the strait was attacked (although the huge German coastal guns in northern France did more damage to Dover than they ever did to shipping).

As the war progressed, the coastal convoy's chief foe switched increasingly from the skies to the seas – German E-boats and Dönitz's U-boats.

It was a merciless war from first to last. HMS Tintagel Castle pursued U878 relentlessly on April 10 1945 – making as many as ten attacks on the German boat. "Finally we got him," recalled CO Robert Atkinson. "I was almost sorry for the U-boat."

This is an excellent addition to WW2 naval literature – detailed, authoritative, and above all very human.



● The stern of HMS Thetis sticks out of Liverpool Bay during desperate attempts to save her crew

Picture: RN Submarine Museum

We went unseen – but not forgotten

AS TOMMY Catlow approached the gangway of HMS Thetis on his way to observe the submarine diving trials his Commanding Officer, Conway Lloyd, who was standing on the fore casing shouted to him: "I think there are too many people on board this submarine, go and play golf."

With these few words Tommy was spared the catastrophe that was to engulf the boat and claim the lives of 99 men.

When Tommy returned to Cammell Laird's shipyard he was given the task of telling the assembled families that there was no hope of rescuing their loved ones. His prepared statement was received in stunned silence. He was then witness to "the most pitiful and heart-rending scenes of wholesale grief – screaming, hysterics, fainting and every other manifestation of human hopelessness".

When I received Tony Booth's book *Thetis Down: The Slow Death of a Submarine* (Pen & Sword, £19.99 ISBN 978-18441-58591), writes George Malcolmson, RN Submarine Museum archivist, I remembered Tommy's story and wondered if the relatives and descendants of the 99 men would welcome another Thetis book to open old wounds.

Author Tony Booth has a fine literary track record with several successful books about naval salvage to his credit.

Cox's Navy dealt with the recovery of the German High Seas Fleet at Scapa Flow and included a chapter covering the company's involvement in the Thetis story. This original research was the seed from which the book now under review grew.

Although the title mimics the recent book and film *Blackhawk Down*, and despite the rather macabre sub title, Tony Booth has produced an extremely readable account of the loss, salvage, refit and subsequent wartime career of the submarine Thetis/Thunderbolt.

Like the story of the Titanic, many will already know the dreadful outcome but the narrative is compelling and dramatically conveys the terrible situation of the men trapped inside.

We learn the reasons why only four men managed to escape from what was Britain's worst peacetime submarine disaster.

The subsequent legal arguments and the years of cross-litigation are well described and many of the myths and misconceptions about this tragic accident are examined.

The author also investigates 'SOS Thetis' – a series of German black propaganda broadcasts and a book designed to damage the confidence of the British war effort. Elements of this plan were so invidiously subtle that even the author, despite having covered the known facts, cannot resist leaving the accusation hanging in the

air that the crew were sacrificed to save the integrity of the submarine.

Thetis Down will complement the standard reference work on the disaster *The Admiralty Regrets* by C E T Warren and James Benson published by Harrap in 1958.

Both co-authors had been submariners and were writing less than 20 years after the accident happened but with little official help although they did have access to some of the people directly involved.

Booth approaches the subject with more scholarly objectivity but I did find his description of the men's final death throes to be quite harrowing.

In previous works this aspect of the disaster has been glossed over. It is difficult to take issue because this appears to have been written in an earnest way and not just for the shock effect.

The author has evidently researched his subject well and he has managed to access many official records. This makes the book an important addition to the catalogue of Thetis literature and I can highly recommend it.

I am certain that this book will introduce a new generation to the subject. The general reader may find some of the detailed technical descriptions difficult to comprehend such as the escape arrangements in the submarine. Many references were made in the text to frame numbers and a clearly-annotated diagram would have helped. A map would also have been useful to help understand the geography associated with the tragedy.

While it was obviously a coup to get such a distinguished author as Len Deighton to write a foreword I can only wonder if he was being ironic when he stated that "the Royal Navy did not have accidents, let alone disasters".

The Area of Remembrance at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum in Gosport is proof, if it were needed, that in the past the Submarine Service has paid enough blood for the 'Price of Admiralty'.

His assertion that "before the Second World War the Royal Navy's Submarine Service had been a dumping ground for difficult officers, alcoholics, misfits and those with ideas of their own" is an astonishing generalisation and quite at odds with the true state of affairs.

THETIS was salvaged and served with honour as HMS Thunderbolt – a fate not shared by most of the boats in Ron Young and Pamela Armstrong's *Silent Warriors: Submarine Wrecks of the United Kingdom, Volume Two* (History Press, £19.99 ISBN 978-0-7254-47896).

Their acclaimed first volume, published in 2006, focused on wrecks off the East Coast and Kent.

Volume two turns its attention to waters from Sussex to the Isles of Scilly. It is no less thorough or impressive.

There are more than three-score boats on the seabed in these seas – mostly U-boats, but many famous RN names too, notably the ill-fated M-class.

The loss of M1 (1925) – equipped with a 12in gun – and seaplane-carrying M2 (1932) are dealt with in depth.

In both cases, it was the boat's principal armament which was their downfall. (M1's gun was wrenched from its fixings; M2 sank with her hangar doors open.) And in both cases, the boats sank with all hands.

The list of all who died in both boats are listed in this excellent book.

But the authors do not stop there: they also list those killed and wounded on merchantmen by the various U-boats before they joined their prey at the bottom.

Not every boat had a tragic end.

There's the Narwhal, sunk as a sonar training target 15 miles off Falmouth. After a quarter of a century she's in remarkably good nick – and still covered with the rubbery coating designed to baffle sensors.

Narwhal is the exception rather than the rule in this book: most boats, especially the British ones, were lost with all hands.

It is left to German witnesses to describe the horrors of a sinking submarine, such as U1195, depth charged off the Isle of Wight just a month before the end of WW2.

One man, recalled Franz Sellinger, "ascended too early and became entangled. He drowned. *Maschinenmaat* [Mechanic, 2nd Class] Schwandt wanted to help but got stuck in the hatch. He was freed by three comrades but found to be dead.

"This led to some men losing their nerve." An officer took charge and ushered six comrades to safety.

Ten days later U1063 suffered a similar fate off Land's End.

Her 28-year-old captain, in charge of his first war patrol, panicked after being depth charged, surfaced the boat and – according to witnesses – was the first up the conning tower and into the water in a dinghy.

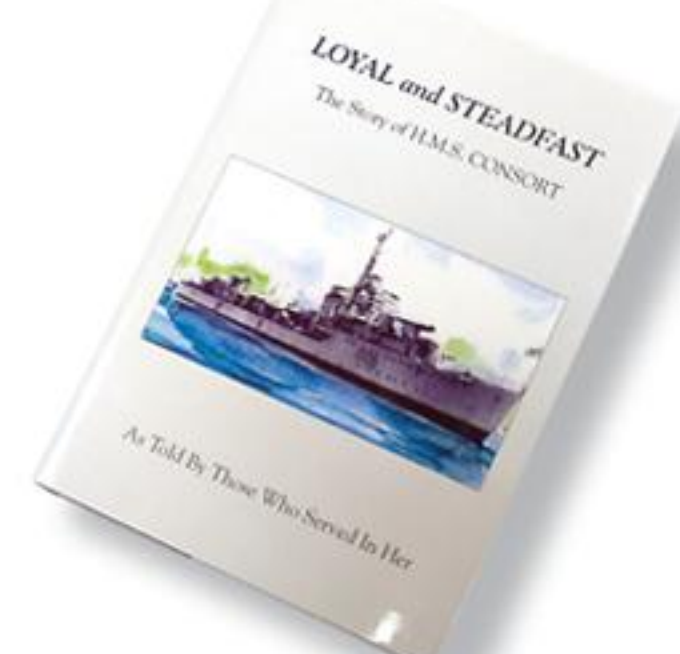
Kapitänleutnant Karl-Heinz Stephan did not survive his boat's loss. Seventeen of his comrades did, among them 19-year-old radio operator Franz Neumayr.

He was picked up by HMS Loch Killin – one of the vessels responsible for crippling the U-boat – and was astonished by the reaction of the British sailors, who handed the *U-boot-Mann* dry clothes, food, cigarettes and a warm cuppa.

Why, one of his *Kameraden* asked in halting English, were his enemies being so nice.

"We treat you just as *wie* would expect to be treated," their captor told them.

It is an endearing – and enduring – quality of the British sailor.



Consort overture

THIS month marks the 60th anniversary of the beginning of the 'Yangtze incident'. The deeds of HMS Amethyst and her rat-killing cat Simon have entered RN history (and folklore – the feline even has his own entry on the internet encyclopaedia Wikipedia).

There is no such entry for HMS Consort. She was the ship relieved by Amethyst on the river which gave the incident its name – and her role in the 1949 has largely been ignored, much to the chagrin of many veterans.

Understandably, for Consort was in the thick of the fight as Paul Morrison's outlines in *Loyal and Steadfast: The Story of HMS Consort* (HMS Consort Association, £10).

Like Amethyst, Consort was subjected to barrages from Communist Chinese shore-based batteries. Boy Seaman Terry Hodgins watched as the spouts of water from Chinese shells moved ever closer to the destroyer. Projectiles started to whine over his head and there was the distinct sound of bullets ricocheting off Consort's superstructure.

"On every run I made between the turret and the shell locker, I had the distinct feeling of being completely at the mercy of our Chinese friends, who could be clearly seen on the river bank," he recalled.

Consort was hit and sailors were killed or wounded. Among the latter was stoker Tom Flanagan, who was carried to the wardroom – "awash with blood" – after a shell smashed his legs.

"When Surg Lt Bentley arrived he explained that he would have to amputate immediately to give me any chance of survival, even though all of his drugs and medical instruments had been blown to bits earlier," the stoker recalled.

Tom Flanagan doesn't remember what happened next – mercifully. The doctor used a straight razor to cut through the ankle joints and sever the left foot before bandaging the rating's right foot.

Consort suffered 40 per cent casualties and fired between 300 and 400 shells at Chinese positions that afternoon, knocking out more than half a dozen gun emplacements.

She was, however, unable to help Amethyst and headed down river, leaving the sloop to endure 101 days trapped on the Yangtze.

In the spring of 1949, the men of HMS Consort were equally fêted. Every ship in Hong Kong acknowledged the destroyer on her return.

"I have never felt so proud and emotional as when the crew of every vessel lined the guard rails and cheered us as we passed," Hodgins remembered. "It was an unforgettable moment."

For a ship which 'only' served in peacetime, Consort had an eventful career: atom bomb tests, the Queen's Olympic cruise, war in Korea, unrest in Malaya.

And it is fitting that this lively small volume is brimming with first-hand accounts – upper and lower-deck.

That reason alone lifts it head-and-shoulders above the many privately-published books flooding the naval market.

Consort's men are still awaiting recognition for their deeds in 1949. This book goes some way towards that goal.

■ Available from association treasurer Terry Hodgins, 21 Belmont Road, Abergavenny, NP7 5HN.

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An invitation to HMS Raleigh

DEDICATION, as the late Roy Castle proclaimed, is what you need.

It's the key to success of every great sportsman and woman. It's the key to success in RN sports too. But sometimes, an invitation's what you need as well.

Grass roots sport in the Senior Service is being bolstered by a very simple – but effective – initiative at HMS Raleigh.

For the past six months, the PTIs at the Torpoint training establishment have been inviting coaches and officials from a cross-section of RN sports to spend time nurturing junior talent.

The result has been a 20 per cent increase in uptake in some sports, with some of the sailors identified by coaches already representing the Senior Service at the U21 level.

Traditionally, trainees passing through Raleigh's gates fill in a form outlining their sporting interests and abilities... which eventually are sorted and passed on to the relevant sporting bodies.

And that's a lot of forms – 2,800 last year – to be sifted by coaches who then decide whether a sportsman or woman is worth following up.

"The other problem with forms is that some people are very humble and play down their abilities, while others claim they are better than they are," explains POPT Jane West, who oversees the grass roots initiative.

The senior rating has represented the RN at bobsleigh and rugby union and has noticed a huge change in the organisation and delivery of sport, ably assisted by LPT's Joe Thornton and Buster Brown, they are simply taking it to the next level.

There simply isn't time during the nine weeks of basic training to allocate time for coaching sessions in a myriad of sports, Jane explains.

But for Raleigh's Phase 2 Recruits – 900 junior rates undergoing specialist instruction in their chosen branches annually, notably submariners, divers, chefs and stewards, logisticians, seaman specialists, hydrographers – there is time: anywhere from four to 26 weeks, with sport programmed into their syllabus.

At the representative level, Phase 2 Training is often the last chance to catch talent: after that they're scattered around the Fleet, off to sea for months on end.

To date a substantial number of RN sporting associations have taken up Raleigh's invitation – fencing, football, equestrianism, boxing, athletics, both rugby codes etc – to run coaching sessions.

"Raleigh has an unbelievable wealth of talent in sport. We're not looking for the finished article, but identifying sportsmen and women with potential," says Jane.

"The sports that succeed are those where the leaders are highly motivated and knowledgeable, those who devote a lot of their own time – most RN sports rely on a dedicated band of volunteers and officials, who use their character and personality to develop their chosen sport."

So dedication's what you need. And it works.

"Last year the RN won more than one in three sporting contests at the representative level across the Services, which is not bad considering we're the smallest," Jane points out.

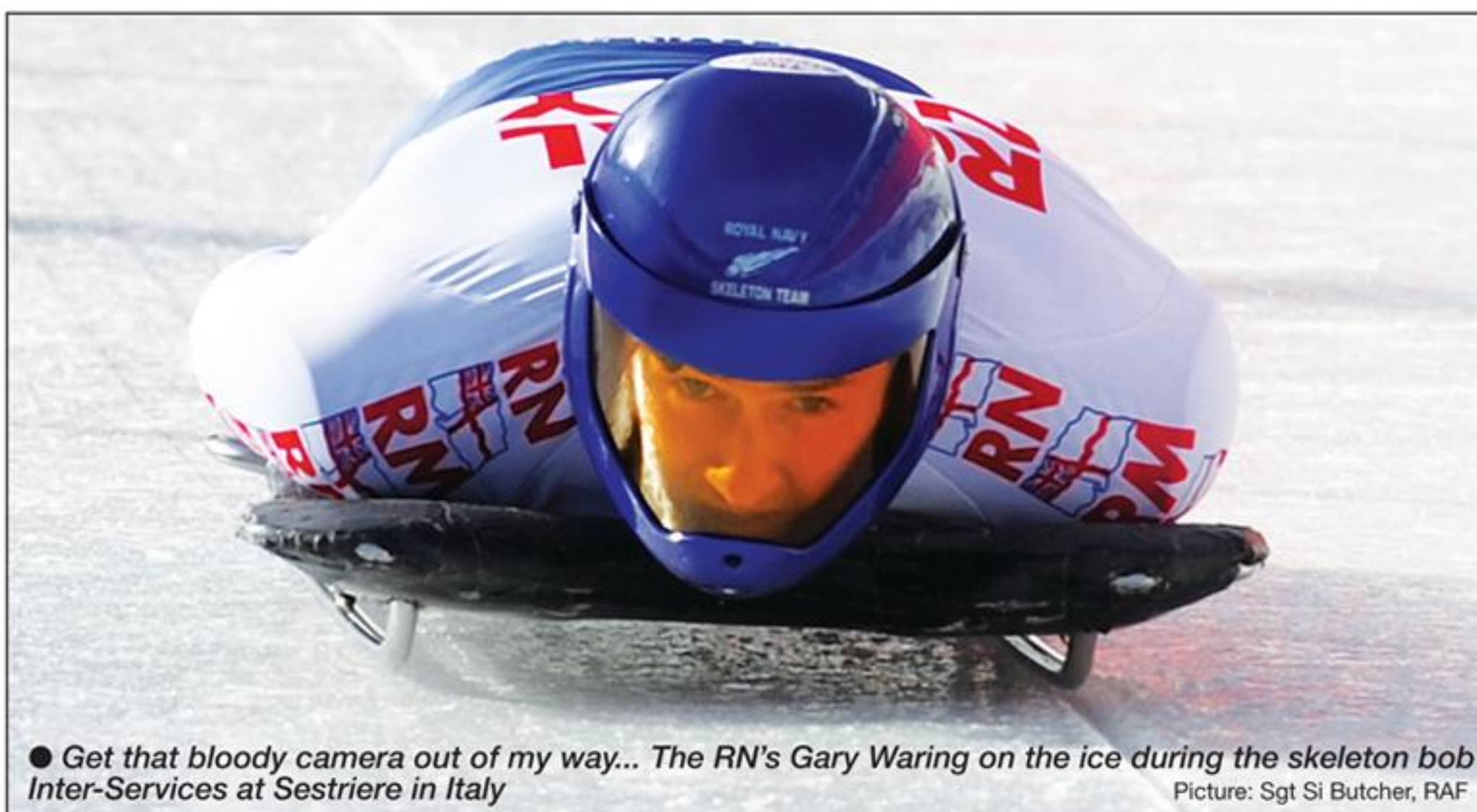
THE Torpoint establishment is also increasingly being used as a venue for RN sporting events and competitions.

Three major contests have been hosted by Raleigh already in 2009: the Inter-Command cross country race, Plymouth Area netball contest and also the Plymouth Area mountain bike championships (pictured below).

In the run, first to complete the six-mile course in the men's category was Band Sgt Tim Watson (HMS Caledonia) on 36m 23s while winner of the three-mile women's event was Culdrose's Lt Linda Lawrence (21m 39s); more from her below right.

BRNC lifted the netball trophy ahead of HMS Albion, while on the cycle Drake's Surg Lt Al Lovell completed eight laps of the (muddy) Raleigh course in 1h 2m 43s. Raleigh's own WO 'Spike' Way took the veterans' gong (1h 15m 24s), while the fastest female was Drake's LNN Bernie Quinn, finishing her three laps in 37m 12s.

Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh



● Get that bloody camera out of my way... The RN's Gary Waring on the ice during the skeleton bob Inter-Services at Sestriere in Italy

Picture: Sgt Si Butcher, RAF

Slide rulers

TWO days of exhilarating ice sliding came to an end in dramatic fashion at the 2009 Inter-Services bobsleigh and skeleton championships.

The Italian town of Sestriere was the venue for the two-day event (it also hosted the 2006 Winter Olympics).

Sixty-nine competitors divided into 21 two-man bobsleigh teams and 27 skeleton riders fought it out on one of the fastest and hardest circuits in the world.

The 1,431-metre Olympic track drops 140m along its course, wending through 19 bends which most of the riders (when they didn't crash) managed to get down in about a minute.

In the bobsleigh events the Royal Navy picked up the prestigious Mo Hammond Trophy men's team award while the Army team won the Women's Team bowl.

Green berets Cpl John Jackson and Mne Jamie Devlin won the individual men's competition, while Devlin added to his medal tally with the fastest push, sharing the trophy with the Army's Capt Henry Nwume.

In the women's contest, the RN were placed third with the Army taking the honours.

There were rather fewer successes for Navy skeletonletes (made-up word – Ed).

Individually, the RN men didn't post a podium finish in the skeleton bob, but collectively they nudged the Army into third place.

AB(D) Ryan Campbell took first as the fastest novice male driver.

The ladies came behind the RAF (the Army could not muster a team), although AB Iliana Veneti took silver in the individual contest.

Meanwhile a bit further north... a week's RN luge championships (think: tea tray, feet first, ice) were

held on the man-made refrigerated ice track at Igls in Austria followed by the Inter-Services at Königssee just across the Austro-German border.

The RN team were fortunate enough to have sliders who were in their second season and could push the RAF and Army teams to their limit.

After the first week's sliding, the RN event was won by 2008 champion Sgt Damian Leaver (HMS Ocean) with a combined time of 1m 27.11s and a top speed of 100.65 kph (approx 58 mph).

And then to Bavaria...

Königssee immediately struck the four RN sliders as a challenging track as it looped back on itself with the final curve known as the Ziel being very tight, giving about a 4G pull on the body, making it very difficult to see the exit straight. Quite a few racers crashed out of the Ziel before the finish.

After some great racing all week, all three Services were very close and the race was sure to be an all-out effort to get a few tenths off the times.

Already the RN champion, NA Annie Edwards (pictured left) proved to be unbeatable in Bavaria too – even by the male sliders.

The triumph came as a bit of a surprise to the junior rating. She hadn't been having a good time at Königssee – until race day that is.

"On the day, something happened, although when I was told I'd won, I was rather in shock," she said.

The aircraft handler from HMS Ocean has been sliding for three years – "hair-raising at first, but after a while you get an adrenaline buzz and want to go again and again" – and says her three male companions had no problems about being beaten by the fairer sex.

"They were fantastic – we were the smallest team at the championships, but came second overall. A really good result."



Climb on board

THE season is on the wane, but nevertheless the Royal Navy needs snowboarders and is actively seeking potential athletes for the Team in preparation for the 2010 Navy and Inter-Services Snowboarding Championships.

Any winter sports experience would be fantastic but is not necessarily a prerequisite.

In fact, the skills required for sports such as skateboarding, BMX, downhill mountain biking, kite/wakeboarding (and many more) are excellent foundations on which to become a competitive snowboarder within the Senior Service.

Personnel involved with the Navy Snowboard Team can expect up to six subsidised weeks a year on snow as well other pre-season training opportunities in preparation for the current competitive disciplines of parallel giant slalom, snowboardcross and slopestyle.

Release of suitable candidates has historically been looked upon very favourably by the powers that be when the time comes.

Candidates should expect an initial informal interview to ascertain their suitability.

Selection for the team will mean an overriding personal commitment to excel. It will be fun, it may even change your life, but is not a game. We are in this to get the gold.

If you are interested, send a brief sporting CV with military contact details only to CPO Mick Arrowsmith 848 NAS, RNAS Yeovilton (email 848WCPO3 Civ 848WPO3@yeovil.mod.com).

Dartmouth's perfect 10s

Britannia Royal Naval College hosted the South-west Area Rugby 10s – and promptly won said event handsomely.

Six teams entered, including two from operational warships (Chatham and Cumberland).

A league table would determine the victors and there was some superb rugby during the course of the afternoon.

Second to sixth places were not determined until the final two matches were played which ensured a great atmosphere for the competition.

First place, however, was settled slightly early.

BRNC won all five of their matches, so were the outright winners scoring 41 points (and conceding a mere three) in the whole competition.

Impressive feats

RN ATHLETES swept the board at the Inter-Services half marathon championships held in conjunction with the prestigious Fleet half marathon.

Having won the event last year, the team – drawn mainly from the Royal Marines – did even better this year by filling four of the first five places.

The RN first team (Cpls Croasdale, Dashper and Cole and C/Sgt Watson) not only beat the other Services, but also placed first in the open competition to trounce some of the top civilian teams in the south.

To round off a great day for the Navy's runners, the RN's second team of Sgt Goodridge, Surg Lt Irving, LAET Gosling and Mne Montague took second place in the open competition.

Eight of the squad then went to Portugal for a week's warm weather training in preparation for defending their Inter Services Marathon Title at the Flora London Marathon on Sunday April 26.

While the Navy did not have it all their own way at the Inter-Services cross-country championships held at Blandford, they still managed to collect some of the silverware.

Lt Linda Lawrence from RNAS Culdrose caused an upset when she broke the Army Ladies' long standing monopoly of podium finishes by winning the bronze medal.

Linda was the first RN lady in living memory to take a top-three place when she out-sprinted Capt Tamzin Clark, one of the Army's all-conquering ladies' athletics team, to create a small piece of Naval sporting history.

Cpl Mark Croasdale once again led the all-conquering RN Veterans team of Lt Cdr Tony Dunn, Cpl Gary Gerrard, CPOPT Wayne Hodgkinson, Sgt Mick Duff and PO Stu Cox to their fifth consecutive championship victory.

● Cpl Mark Croasdale just ahead of fellow veteran Cpl Gary Gerrard at the Inter-Services cross-country event



Dragons be here(oes) Bowmen's bullseye

HMS EXCELLENT hosted the 2009 University Royal Naval Unit Sports Competition which was won this year by Wales URNU.

All 14 units took part with more than 500 students competing in six disciplines.

Defending champions Southampton URNU won the hockey in a penalty shootout against Aberdeen, who had just won the shooting.

Cambridge powered their way to victory in the rowing, but it was Wales who triumphed in rugby, sailing and a thrilling netball final to take the shield, followed by Bristol and Liverpool in joint second place. The shield was presented by Capt MFP, Capt Peter Lambourn.

Away from the sports field there was fun to be had at the sports social held in the Victory Club, and considerable effort was put into attempting to 'borrow' other teams' mascots.

Bristol failed to keep their elephant in one piece, and Wales lost their dragon once again.

Slightly safer was the mascot competition winner – a vintage fire engine driven by some particularly dapper members of London URNU.



● Wales URNU ladies celebrate victory in a thrilling netball final

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson, FRPU East

Kings' Swiss role

THE RN Ice Hockey Association sent its best players to compete in the 2009 European Services Championships held in Lyss, Switzerland, writes Lt Cdr Alain Bernard.

The Royal Navy Kings were joined by the British Army Blades, the Royal Air Force Aces and police and military teams from across Europe to challenge for the title of best Service ice hockey team on the Continent.

The RN squad arrived in Switzerland without any great expectations, aware that the standard of play would be far greater than anything experienced within the confines of Services ice hockey in the UK.

As the 2007 and 2008 tri-service champions, the RN were looking to place themselves above the other two British service teams and be competitive while benefitting from the exposure to the high-calibre hockey.

A concerted effort was put in to get the most of the Service's top-tier players released within the constraints of the current high operational tempo of all Fleet and RM units. At the same time, the opportunity was also taken to invite three or four developmental players to reward their commitment to the team.

Service requirements prevented the team from completing a training camp before traveling to Switzerland, but the players did manage to take to the ice a few times to get rid of the cobwebs.

Most of the team had not had the opportunity to play competitively since the last tri-services held in Sheffield last June and the friendly fixtures against an established local side and the British Army would be important in gauging the team's status before the competition began.

The RN squad was competitive in both games, losing by one goal to the Swiss side and beating the Army by two goals the following day.

The Kings would play in group one along with the Zurich police, Viennese police, Team Germany (German National Police), Selection Ticino (Police and Border Guards from the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland) and the Polish police.

The first three teams would advance to the championship round while places four to six would play the equivalent-placed teams from the other two groups to determine final standings.

The Kings' opener saw them

pitted against the Polish police at the Lyss Stadium. The team's nervousness was evident as the Kings got off to a slow start, conceding four goals in the first period.

After some soul-searching during the intermission, the Kings came out fighting and clawed back led by Mne Adam Hankins (FPGRM) to reduce the deficit to one goal by late in the game; Hankins would once again go on to lead the team in scoring during the tournament.

Regrettably, penalties would cost the Kings and while the RN was a man down, the Poles added a late goal to win 5-3.

The second game against the Viennese police was another penalty-filled affair, although this time, the Kings were the beneficiary of the man advantage most of the time.

The main powerplay line of Mnes Hankins and Cameron (RM Stonehouse CSG), Cpl Jared Stauble (FPGRM), Lt Cdr Bernard (on exchange in Australia) and Lt John Rutter (845 NAS) made the most of it, scoring four powerplay goals while LS Armstrong (HMS Liverpool) turned away most of the shots he faced in net on the way to a 6-2 victory.

The 1-1 record left the Kings in fourth place at the end of day one – a surprising but very pleasing result.

The Kings' confidence had grown on the back of their first victory and the team approached the second day's play with far more optimism.

Despite being underdogs, they saw themselves having a chance at qualifying in the top three of the group.

The first opponents were 'Team Germany' – undefeated on day one. The Kings were keen to get off to a good start and took the play to the Germans. Unfortunately, the RN's physical style of play attracted the disapproval of the officials and the Kings got into penalty trouble.

Another excellent performance from LS Armstrong in the nets kept the RN squad in the game, but a few questionable officiating decisions eventually sealed the Kings' fate, going down to the Germans in a close 3-2 game.

The physical game and penalties also physically drained the team, resulting in the Kings coming out very flat against a fresh Swiss-Italian side only an hour later.

Their well-rested adversaries took an early 5-0 lead and never looked back, eventually defeating the RN 7-1.

The final game of the day saw the Kings play the group leaders,



● A brief pause for Lt John Rutter during the thumping of the Viennese police

Picture: Musn Jon Booth, RM Band Portsmouth

Zurich Police. Although the Kings were able to stay out of the penalty box, legs were tired after two gruelling days of hockey and the team was never really in it against the well-drilled and experienced Swiss coppers, going down 11-3 with LS Armstrong having his only bad game of the tournament in net.

In the end, the Kings finished on a par in group one with the Poles, equal in goal difference.

That opening game which the RN lost to the Poles tipped the balance; the Poles took fourth on the back of that result.

Although the Kings had accomplished their goal of being competitive, it was a disappointing result to not get to play for tenth place after missing out by so little.

Instead, they would play the other two fifth-placed teams, the British Army Blades and Team Austria the following day to determine their final position.

The Kings acquitted themselves well again, narrowly beating the British Army Blades 4-2 and losing a physical nail-biter 5-4 to the Austrians, just failing to equalise in the dying seconds.

Overall, the team's performance was judged a success.

No-one expected the UK teams to be competitive, but the RN skaters proved they could be just that – and more. With a little more luck, the Kings could have finished much higher than their eventual 14th place.

"The RN suffered from a short bench and we simply got tired and lacked the practice of the other teams," said Lt Cdr Bernard.

"We simply did not have the numbers to take up the slack. We also need to make sure that we play more games at this standard before the 2011 competition.

"I'm still proud of our performance. We played well offensively, our goalies kept us in the games and we came top of the UK teams participating while being competitive in most of our games."

The focus of the RNIHA now are the Inter-Services in Sheffield during the first week of June.

The Kings will also play a preliminary game against the RAF Aces in Cardiff on May 8.

More details on from S/Lt Adam Lappin (HMS Raleigh) on southernrep@rndevelopers.co.uk or LS(CIS) Darren Smalley (HMS Edinburgh) on 07824 395945.

THE Navy Archery Association cleaned up at the Inter-Services indoor championships at the National Sports Centre at Lilleshall with the RN triumphing in all three team events, writes Lt Jonathan Parker.

The event opened with the compound unlimited team shoot. For those who have never seen these bows, they are a collection of pulleys, cables and sights which has the effect of making the most powerful bows possible using modern technology.

The RN team of LLogs CS(D) Andrew 'Knocker' White (HMS Chatham), CPOET(ME) Darren Bennion (SFM Devonport) and S/Lt Nick Hepworth (HMS Collingwood) all shot a little under par, but the overall team score was strong enough that the RN won by eight points, 1615 to the RAF's 1607.

Although Knocker had ambitions to make the shoot-offs on completion – and confirm himself as one of the top 32 archers in the country – it was left to Daz Bennion as the top RN archer with a score of 548 from 600 to come second in the Inter-Service rankings.

Knocker and Nick came 4th and 5th respectively with scores of 540 and 527. To achieve the shoot-offs in the National competition, the score this year turned out to be 565.

Day two saw the main event of the Inter-Services, the senior recurve competition for serving personnel only alongside the Association Competition, also for recurve bows.

The recurve bow is the one used at the Olympics, the highest development of what the longbow was with the latest materials but still only using one string.

The Senior team of Lt Jonathan Parker (HMS Raleigh), CPO Barry Green (HMS Collingwood), CPO Andy Robertson (HMS Chatham) and Mne Seb York (FPGRM) had a real fight on their hands.

The RAF had brought a full team of four – with three very able shooters. Indeed, the female member of their team went on to compete in the knock-out stages of the tournament, coming sixth overall and being easily the best Service archer on the day.

The Navy relied on a consistent team effort and despite Jonathan and Barry being below their normal standards, Seb York and Andy Robertson both shot well, leaving the team scores separated by a mere nine points out of just over 2,000 scored.

The teams were effectively separated by one arrow out of 480 shot, while Andy was the third-place Service archer.

Sadly the Army did not field a Service team: operations took priority, but the soldiers were represented in the association section – retired personnel, reserves or dependents with links to their service; their inclusion helps to give service archery a broader base of support and, in the Navy's case, includes the RFA.

Although the Army were represented, they had only managed a team of three, unlike the RAF and Navy's four. Inevitably, they came 3rd while the RN's team of Cdr Ian Harrop, Rob Smith, Chris MacFadyen and Simon Woolston all shot competitively to win the final team event comfortably.

The RN Archery Association exists to support all archers, from those interested in the sport right up to the highest competitive standards. It runs a Naval indoor and outdoor competition every year at HMS Collingwood, competes in the Inter-Services every year, has regular shoots against St Dunstan's and is looking to expand the sport.

Details from Lt Parker on 9375 41213, Raleigh-wdto@jdp298@zepler.net

RN turn full Thirkle

Continued from page 52

visitors a 2-0 lead at half time.

The second half saw a change in the weather. Driving rain worsened conditions and the RN took advantage of the AFA's weakened defence.

Again, good pressure from Yates freed the ball and he quickly fed it in between the defenders, Musumeci once again rounded the keeper and played the ball into the net – 3-0 Navy.

The home side were not yet defeated and still looked threatening when in the Navy's half. The Navy's defence were called into action on more than one occasion with AET

Patterson (HMS Heron) making a tremendous block to deny the home side a goal.

Despite the onslaught of attacks by the AFA, the Navy were not finished at the other end.

With ten minutes to go, Logs (SC) Evans (HMS Neptune) found space a yard inside the penalty box and side-footed the ball past the keeper 4-0 to clinch the U19's first win of the season.

Overall, a spirited and well disciplined display of football by the young Navy side.

And finally... The redesigned and much improved RNFA website is now up and running at royalnavyfa.com.

Cyclists on course

2009 looks set to be another outstanding year for RN/RM Cycling Association with the team benefiting from a Sports Lottery-funded training camp, honing their skills and laying down the final layers of their preparation for the year ahead, writes WO1(WEM) Andy Hunstone.

The offroad squad, led by Maj Andy Plewes, will be tackling a variety of races throughout the year all of which count towards a Combined Service League place.

The event is becoming more competitive each year and the RNRMCMA has some outstanding riders.

Early season events included local area championships in both Plymouth and Portsmouth.

Both races attracted good fields, which encouragingly included many novice riders despite a spell of bad weather.

The road squad have been preparing hard for the toughest season yet with some riders planning on stepping up to compete in road races and long distance time trials (24-hour national championships).

Early indicators are good with the club recording wins in both Portsmouth (Jerry Bromyard) and Plymouth (Lt Steve Kelly) at time trials and a podium finish for the team's road secretary CPOPT Sean Childs at the springtime pursuits (road race) near Exeter.

The club organises many events throughout the season including a two-up time trial and a road race championships.

Both these events are very popular and the added bonus of being held at RNAS Merryfield (Yeovilton's satellite airfield) gives the riders the safety of a traffic-free route ideal for beginners.

Equally exciting is the up-and-coming 'sportive' scene, ideal for riders who like the challenge of long-distance riding without the formality of race conditions.

The Combined Service event for 2009 will be held in conjunction with the Highclere Castle event on June 7.

More details on these events – and Senior Service cycling – at www.navycycling.org.uk.



High hoops

HMS Nelson was the venue for this year's Inter-Service netball championships – now in their 53rd year.

On paper, both RN teams had a very good chance of success against the RAF and the Army, writes RN 2nd team coach Lt Linda Harris.

The 2nd teams (previously 'development' teams) were first to take to the courts. The standard of all the 2nd teams was very high and the matches closely-fought.

First up were the RAF. The RN maintained a slight lead throughout, with Logs(CS) Alumita Lutu remaining calm as she accurately shot under pressure. Assistance from her two goal shooters Lt Cdr Kim Mehta and Logs(Pers) Terri Richards ensured this lead was never broken. The defensive work of Lt Emma Searle, Lt Anna Jones and MA Sarah Tims ensured that pressure was applied on the RAF throughout the game. The RAF eventually succumbed to this pressure, losing the match 31-24.

The next morning, the second team faced the Army knowing that a win would seal the 2nd team title.

Captain Surg Lt Cdr Lindsay Falla guided the RN into a lead by the end of the second quarter, and the Army were under pressure. The soldiers were not willing to give up and fought back, closing the gap entirely to leave the score 25-25 at the end of the quarter.

The final quarter of the match was tense and the Army attacked with vigour.

Although the RN fought back, the Army managed to take – and extend – the lead, despite brave efforts from the Navy attack of AB (CIS) Michelle Taylor and Logs(SC) Camilla Hodgson. It was a tense quarter, but the RN lost the game 28-36.

Meanwhile, the main 1st team competition opened with the Army scraping victory over the RAF by a single goal.

The RN 1st team played the RAF on the second day of the tournament and were confident

that they could win.

Captain Lt Sasha Miller (pictured above by LA(Phot) Luron Wright) encouraged her team throughout and the shooters – Lt Amanda Heal and Lt Cdr Katherine Rackham – kept their nerve against a good RAF defence. With the combination of good shooting and interceptions from the RN defence of CPO(CT) Pippa Dredge, POLogs(SC) Michelle Curry and LMEA Lyndsay Oldridge, the RN won the game, 38-34.

Hopes were high going into the final day of the tournament. If the RN were to beat the Army, then the tournament trophy would belong to the RN for the first time in 29 years.

The RN 1st team were all too aware of the 2nd team's defeat the previous day and did not want the same thing to happen to them.

Logs(Pers) Sarah Bearcroft and Lt Miller provided a strong RN attack to pressure the Army defence. Logs(CS) Lizzie Down supported the shooting to place the RN in a good fighting position.

The first two quarters were nail-biting with numerous interceptions and fast-paced attack. The pace was so fast, and the defence so rigorous, collisions were inevitable. The RN goal defence suffered an ankle injury and Lt Searle took to the court, having been selected from the 2nd team after her strong performance.

She worked hard with CPO(CT) Dredge but the Army were the stronger team and took the lead, widening the gap in the final quarter to win 50-36.

"The RN teams have come so far in the last four years that we are no longer the 'whipping boys' but are now credible contenders," said RN coach Lt Cdr Arty Shaw.

"With a bit of luck and two consistent games in the bag we will be winners very shortly."

"Playing in the South regional league has certainly helped the squad this year and with the nucleus of the 1st team playing as Navy Blues in the Portsmouth League, we are developing our core skills."

"It all bodes well for the forthcoming season and our assault on next year's title."

● The school of hard Nock... Submariner Mike Nock prepares to strike during one of the two victories over the RAN during the U23 Combined Services tour



Aussies ruled

SIX RN personnel were specially selected to represent the Combined Services U23 hockey squad for their tour to Australia, writes Cpl Chris Brady, CS U23 manager.

Unfortunately, due to a series of injuries and operational requirements, only four RN personnel were lucky enough to travel:

S/Lt Tim Lomas, LS Graham Kerr, submariner Mike Nock and Mne Sean Frank, all participated in the high profile, 21,500-mile round trip, competing against one of the biggest hockey nations in the world.

Unlike most interpretations of sports tours, this was to be one of the most challenging and intense tours in CS history – six matches in 12 days, playing against some of the best teams in Australia in temperatures in excess of 35°C.

It started with a match against district civilian team Ryde.

With all the Brits suffering from jet lag, this was a real test of character – and turned into a very convincing (and unexpected) 4-0 win, with great performances from S/Lt Lomas and Mne Frank in defence helping to keep a clean sheet.

Next up were the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The CS has never beaten the ADF so the pressure was on.

In a very tactical and high-energy game the CS managed a come back from 2-0 down after the first half to draw level going into the last quarter of the match with a stunning goal created by, LS Graham Kerr releasing one of his RAF colleagues clear to bring the game back within reach.

Within minutes of the restart a mirrored move, this time from the right saw Nock firing in a pinpoint pass to one of his Army colleagues who put away the winner making history for the CS U23's with a sensational 3-2 win.

With an increasing list of injuries, the CS team only had ten players for a match against Briars – Australian grand finalists the previous year.

Even the CS physio was forced to pick up a stick and play. Needless to say, the Brits were heavily defeated.

The squad nevertheless came away from the match in good spirit regardless of the result, which could have been more embarrassing without an awesome individual performance from Mne Frank in defence which kept the score down, although the Royal picked up a shoulder injury after making a superb last-ditch diving tackle to prevent a certain goal for the opposition.

With the squad back to almost full strength thanks to the physio, we were able to work on some more advanced tactics and experiment with formations ahead of the two important finale matches against the Australian Navy.

Still without star RN defender Frank, who was suffering from the shoulder injury, and with temperatures in excess of 38°C, we predicted that it would be a very tight, hard match.

Our predictions couldn't have been any more accurate: we were hit with wave after wave of clever offensive moves by the Australians, resulting in two goals within the first ten minutes of play.

With RN midfielders Kerr and Nock on fire, the CS managed to soak up the bombardment only to concede in the last play of the half whilst one of our players was off thanks to a yellow card.

The whistle at the end of the half was welcomed greatly by all and gave me a chance to talk to the players and change the formation to better suit the match, noticing some holes in the Australian setup during the first half.

The next 35 minutes was set to be an uphill struggle for players and management alike.

In the first move of the game from the CS – a break from the defence – Kerr threaded a pinpoint pass down the line for one of his Army counterparts to put away the chance, putting us on the front foot for the first time in the game.

This was a big lift for the team, as we raised the pace and with captain Lomas having such a solid game, it allowed Army midfielder Biggs to push upfront to add more pressure.

The gamble paid off and Biggs fired home two well-worked goals to bring the Combined Services back to 3-3, but with seconds to go, Biggs once again saw himself on the end of a well worked offensive move to slot home the winner.

The second match was set to be a great contest; with Mne Frank fit to play, we had a few aces up our sleeves.

We started the match as we finished it, with Frank in reserve on the bench.

Once again we conceded early due to a mistake between captain Lomas and the Army keeper, but came back immediately with an intelligent counter-attack which took the Australians by surprise.

Both sides' exchanged goals once again to take the match to 2-2 but the Australians came back with a well-worked strike just before the break to put us behind.

Half time gave us an ideal opportunity to bring on Frank in defence plus in-form RAF goalkeeper Thompson.

The marine had an immediate impact on the game allowing the midfield to push forward resulting in the CS scoring within the first five minutes of the second period, followed immediately by another with the very next phase of play.

The Australians however came back with a vengeance, but some fine work in the CS net by Thompson and the RN duo of Lomas and Frank in defence kept us on top.

With the Australians tiring, we took the opportunity to push the game further and finished with a flurry of two fine goals to make it 6-3 and take the match out of sight – a fitting conclusion to a very successful series of matches for Combined Services hockey.

All in all, this tour was a huge success, with every one exceeding all expectations from both myself and the hockey world, with sensational input from the RN members.

The CS Hockey Association is continually looking for young talented players for the squad, as well as coaches and umpires.

If you are interested or require more information please feel free to contact me at bradyc494@coningsby.raf.mod.uk

Nationale treasure

■ Continued from page 52
Half time and the RN were 15-10 behind.

Whatever was said at halftime certainly had the right effect on the Britons.

For the first time in the match they started to put structure to their attacks and it seemed it was only a matter of time.

The first move of the half saw Josh tripped ten metres short of the goal line with the ever-present Matt Parker in support awaiting the scoring pass.

However from a scrum shortly afterwards Navy replacement No.8, Gaz Evans, picked the ball up and strolled over the line at an almost leisurely pace. Rob Lloyd nailed the conversion and for the first time in the match the Navy were in the lead, 17-15.

The applause had barely faded when the RN were again on the attack. A simple cut back allowed Rob Lloyd the freedom to attack down the blindside against an isolated defence. He made the conversion easy for himself: 24-15.

The French have always been resilient and the score prompted them to renew their efforts. With a couple of replacements freshening up their forward drives, they forced the RN to show considerable commitment in defence.

Time and time again the British blue line stood firm but eventually it was breached and Marine Nationale were back in the match with their third try to leave the game delicately poised at 24-20.

In keeping with the topsy-turvy match, the RN showed that they had more to give.

Another move started from their own half saw centre and man of the match Calum McCrae put in to space and, with one man to beat, his step inside took him under the posts for what proved to be a crucial try. Rob Lloyd's conversion gave the Navy an eleven point cushion at 31-20.

Under normal circumstance the RN would have looked to control the match to the end.

However a mix-up at the base of what had been a very secure scrum allowed the Marine Nationale scrumhalf to break away and nip over for a well-taken individual try which was against the run of play but nevertheless well-deserved by a player who had been the heartbeat of the French team.

With a little over 13 minutes to go the lead was once more back to a single score at 31-27.

The final ten minutes were to prove bizarre to say the least with four yellow cards proving to be the source of much post-match discussion, not least because the Navy Director of Rugby Lt Cdr Geraint Ashton Jones had missed one of them – only to be put right by Navy President Admiral Neil Morisetti along with First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Jonathon Band and Lady Sarah.

The game reduced to 14 French players versus 12 Brits; the RN replacement wing Sili Buinimasi deservedly the first to go following a late body check on his opposite number.

Sili was followed by replacement Gaz Evans who was alleged to have joined a ruck without using his arms. A harsh call – particularly in consideration of what had been a very physical mainly fair contest.

The next two yellow cards were probably the result of everyone feeling the pressure as the match. Following a maul that had been brought to ground – fairly – by Navy No.4 Damo Chambers and the Marine Nationale decided to continue their own brand of *entente cordiale*. Many probably thought a penalty would have sufficed but both offenders were sent to the by-now crowded sin bin.

Despite the extra space on the pitch the last couple of minutes was dominated by the well-organised RN defence.

With the final whistle and a deserved victory by 31-27 RN captain Marsh Cormack received the Babcock Challenge Trophy.

Next month



How Jack Cornwell inspires a new generation of sailors



Cyprus tre(mendous) – life with the smallest RN force



'king awesome – 40 years of the Sea King



... and the Harrier



SPORT



● Up 'n' Fratton... AET Jamie Thirkle draws back his left leg to hammer in his second goal in the 2-1 victory over the Army at Fratton Park

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson, FRPU East

RN turn full Thirkle

THE Senior team took the honours (2-1) at the most important game of the RNFA season – the home fixture against the Army played at Fratton Park in Portsmouth in front of 2,000 noisy spectators.

The evening was graced by the presence of the First and Second Sea Lords – among many other senior officers – and guest of honour was Barry Bright, vice chairman of the FA, while a Royal Marines Band added the icing on the cake.

The RN totally dominated the first half, and two goals from AET Jamie Thirkle, in the fourth and 30th minutes, left the home supporters buzzing at half time.

The second period was much tighter, and Navy keeper LPT Matt Shortt made a fantastic point-blank stop within minutes of the restart.

Sensing a turn in their fortunes, the Army introduced some fresh substitutes who really stretched our midfield and defence. It was no surprise when they pulled one back after 65 minutes.

This set up a tense final quarter of the game, with both sides battling hard, and chances at both ends. The Navy's heroic efforts won the day, but not before Matt Shortt made an incredible stretched save to his right, deep into injury time. David James would have been proud of that one.

Navy skipper POET(WE) Phil Archbold proudly lifted the Constantinople Cup with LPT Steve Young winning the Man of the Match award. A great evening.

Previously, we narrowly lost the first game of the 2009 Inter Service competition to the RAF (0-1).

The first half was evenly-matched and Mne Dan Boere and POPT Steve O'Neil both had good chances, with LPT Shortt once again excelling in the Navy goal.

Shortt was called into action three minutes after the interval when he saved a 35-yard free kick that was hit with pace and power.

Boere responded for the RN with a long-range effort that went just over the crossbar.

On 50 minutes the Navy worked a short corner that gave LPT Steve Young an opportunity to score, but brave keeping from the RAF No.1 denied him his chance of glory.

With ten minutes remaining the



Onside with Capt Paul Cunningham, RNFA

RAF broke the deadlock, and the Navy's hopes, with a well-worked goal.

The RN Seniors pressed exceptionally hard for a deserved equaliser but the RAF managed to close out the game to claim the win. Our Man of the Match was Logs Shawn Benjamin, on debut at the heart of the Navy defence.

The women's team enjoyed a 2-1 win against the Met Police ladies, where a good performance was as important as the result after a couple of heavy defeats.

The team was boosted by the return of LS Julie Hewitt, although a 36-hour trip back from Djibouti via Cyprus, Germany and Birmingham was far from ideal preparation.

The Navy set out with a 4-2-4 formation, and from the first whistle showed their attacking intent with a good through ball from AB Kaylee Edwards allowing Surg Lt Steph Ingram to outpace the defence and cause the keeper to make a good save.

Both teams were trying to use the wings to develop attacks, and this led to an open flowing game. In the 19th minute Surg Lt Ingram ran at the defence, and her pace led to a free kick on the edge of the box.

From there, the ball was rolled back to LS Hewitt, who drove the ball into the top right hand corner of the net.

The goal boosted the confidence of the Navy players and led to a period of good possession and attacking play, which led to our best goal of the season (so far) in the 34th minute.

A Police corner was cut out by PO(REG) Garrett, who played a simple pass out to Logs Jenni Conning. She passed the ball into Surg Lt Ingram's feet, who controlled, turned and played a good pass into Hewitt as she advanced down the right flank. Hewitt played the ball round one side of the full back and ran around the other, got into the box and delivered a perfect cross to the edge of the six-yard box, where Logs Becky Brown was able to volley in at the near post for her first RN goal. And what a fabulous team goal it was.

After half time the Met raised their game, began to contain the Navy, and got a foothold on the game.

Stand-in keeper CPO Wendy Frame was busy, but without having to pull off any major saves.

This was the pattern for the next 20 minutes, with both sides trying to get the important "next goal".

Surg Lt Ingram had a shot which just cleared the crossbar, after good work by Logs Brown to win the ball from the police left back.

On 72 minutes, Frame was finally beaten after Mitch Garrett missed a header from the police's right winger; the ball fell to the Met's forward, who drilled a low shot into the bottom corner.

The RN reacted well to the goal and upped their workrate to close out the game the stronger of the two sides. Hewitt, Garrett and Farthing all went close in the final five minutes as the Navy pushed to get a goal to seal the win.

This was a much-needed result and performance as the Navy looked forward to the RAF in their first Inter-Service game.

With the return of a few players, the squad is looking more balanced than in the previous couple of seasons, with options in all positions.

The U19s lost 3-0 to a powerful London County team in the South East Counties Cup.

The RN were disappointed to concede from a long throw with London capitalising on their physical size and power.

The Navy showed strong character to play themselves back into the game but unfortunately could not take advantage of the opportunities which came their way.

The RN were again undone on the stroke of half time with a well-worked goal.

Our youngsters came out in the second half 'all guns blazing' but London stood firm and kept AET Musumeci (HMS Heron) and the other RN forwards at bay.

However the game was put beyond doubt late on with London's third goal.

The RN battled hard and played

well, and the score was not a true reflection of play.

The U19s then travelled to Waltham Abbey to face the Amateur Football Association for their penultimate match before departing for their annual pilgrimage to the youth competition in Dallas.

Strong winds and a poor pitch made play difficult for both teams. The Navy won a corner three minutes into the game and a set-piece delivery from NA Devlin (HMS Seahawk) swung the ball out to AEM Musumeci on the edge of the box. He drilled the ball through the crowd of players into the back of the net.

The Navy applied pressure to the struggling AFA defence throughout the first half. AB Yates (HMS Westminster) stole the ball and quickly delivered it to Musumeci who lost his marker and rounded the keeper to give the

Continued on page 50

Nationale treasure

JUST as their professional counterparts did at Twickenham, so the RN rugby union 1st XV dispatched the French on English soil – but by a far-less-emphatic scoreline.

A large and vociferous crowd at Burnaby Road saw the 12-man RN side hold on to Babcock Challenge trophy with a 31-27 victory over their French counterparts – and take a 4-1 lead in a series which has quickly become established as a challenge to match the Inter-Services.

The Marine Nationale set their stall out early. A deftly-weighted kick resulted in a score being awarded to the French, despite the covering attempts on Navy fullback Andy Vance. With the conversion the RN suddenly found themselves 7-0 down.

However they were soon back in the game; RN pressure paid off and a cross kick by fly half Rob Lloyd was caught on the full by flyer Josh Drauniniu, who literally fell over the line to score. Unfortunately the conversion was missed.

This first try was nothing compared to the RN's second. In response to a harsh penalty and three points conceded, the Navy forwards upped the tempo and with the better quality possession the Navy backline had three clear opportunities to score.

Just when all seemed lost and the Marine Nationale had pushed the RN all the way back in to their own 22, a small opportunity arose and the Brits pounced.

It started with hooker Ben Priddey popping the ball to allow Calum McCrae to hit the hole in the defence at pace. His angled run found Navy tighthead John Court who linked with flyhalf Rob Lloyd to take the ball into the French half.

Another deft kick was gathered by Marsh Cormack who linked with blindside flanker Gareth Jones. As he was tackled he popped the ball back up to the move's instigator, Ben Priddey, who ran the final five metres to score and tie the match at 10-10.

A needless Navy penalty allowed the Marine Nationale to set up a five-metre lineout and exert some concerted pressure. A couple more penalties were conceded with the pressure on the Navy line unrelenting. Eventually they ran out of defenders and conceded the pushover score.

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